

Sermon :: 17-Apr-2025
Maundy Thursday, All Years

“Lavish”

A reflection for Maundy Thursday

Lavish!

No, not the room – stark, plain
 not the fare – the annual Mosaic lamb
 not the guests – the same old twelve
 But the *host!* Lavish in love.

The Son of Man – the Word made flesh – the Godhead, visible
willingly, lovingly visible
Strips to the waist, ties on an apron and ... crawls? creeps? grunts?

His way
pushing a heavy, slippery, slopping basin
palming a ratty, raggedy, shop-worn towel
 from one pair of filthy, callused, unpretty feet to
 another
 turned, bashfully, inward
 toes curled almost-under in

embarrassment?
astonishment?
uncomfort?
anxiety?

dripping, scrubbing, rubbing, caressing
rinsing, drying, kissing, loving
blessing
them, until all twelve—aghast! unsure! obedient, yet unknowing
what, or why—
sport ankles and arches not just clean, but pure; not only fresh, but perfect

*He gave no choice, but made command
Not with His voice, but with a hand:
"If you be I, this I must do,
No more, no less, to HOLY you."*

He'd preached ... He'd taught ... He'd spoken ... He'd parabled
 He'd argued ... He'd challenged ... He'd healed ... He'd prayed
Not to *no* avail ... **but nor** to *enough*:
 They saw, but did not take ... heard, but did not open
 the gift He'd kept setting before them:
 the charity of God not only ready—but *eager*—to give God's all—
 nothing less **than cosmos** itself—
 to
 a fisherman, a tax collector
 a belovèd, a betrayer

And so, God stooped ~ still lower, still humbler, still servant-**er**
still more no-one, and thus more every-one
Stooped to take, in Heavenly hand,
the accumulated mud and muck of a day
and a lifetime
of sin ... of sorrow ... of fault ... of failure
To hallow the grime
To bless the mire
To embrace the sores, the blisters, the cracks and jagged edges
To love the unlovable, unloveliest, unloving, lowest, grossest *ends*
of the friends
who – somehow – had still not learned how ... *why* ...
to love Him
and, in Him, each other
and, in each other, the world
they'd soon be sent
to bathe
in the Good News of Agony-Cross and Alleluia-Tomb

So, Son of Man doubles down and doubles over
Folding His body to floor :: *His* face to *their* mess
His Hand to rag :: *His* eyes to *their* nethermost

~ And He **lāves** ~ washing and drying, scouring and patting, humming and soothing
 lāves ~ in abundance, in comfort, in joy
 lāves ~ to teach, to preach, to **example**
 lāves ~ to compass,* to contént, to console
 lāves ~ **dipping** and **dripping**, wringing and reaching, cooing and consecrating
 Until lāve – lāve – lāve – becomes lāve – lāv – *lavish!*:
 lavishing Himself upon friends
 lavishing Word upon world
 lavishing peace and kindness and regard upon those – *us* – so
 unaccustomed to its offer
 wary of its Truth
 That it's only when someone stoops to take *our* feet
 soothe *our* sores
 lāve *our* filth
 That we glimpse – in water sprinkled
 glance upturned
 toes tickled
 "Thank you" whispered
 The most **lavish** love **of** most **lavish** God
 Who takes the last moments of a very private calm
 before a very public chaos
 to lāve and lavish, lavish and lāve
 love, love, love, love
 Himself
 into our soles ... our **souls** ... our very selves

He made command, but not through power
To wash this world in love, that our
*Christ **would known** to world **be***
 <<**beat**>> *In lavished love and charity.*

AMEN.

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* *I.e.*, encircle, as with hand ... and with love.