

## Not My Dirty Feet!

Today has been a cold, wet, dreary day. It started at daylight this morning when I went out in the rain and the 40 degree temperature to check the cows for calving. By the time I made my rounds I was cold, dirty and miserable. Twice more today, I got to repeat the episode. You guessed it; still raining and still cold.

Tonight when I came in and took off all my wet and dirty clothes, I was home by myself so I drew a long hot bath. As I lay there soaking and reading my Bible, I ran across the passage in John 13 where Jesus was washing the feet of Peter and His other disciples.

If you remember the story, Peter balked at the idea of the Lord Jesus washing his dirty feet. In fact, Peter said “you will never wash my feet.” I know I would be reluctant too. It is sort of like your mother telling you to be sure to put on clean underwear before you leave the house in case you are in an accident the doctors won’t see your dirty ones. No one with any self respect wants their physical filth to be seen or have to be cleaned up by others.

If I am dirty and stink, I had rather wash myself than for someone else to know how bad it is! I have been in enough hospitals to know what a bed pan is and I know that if you are in bad enough shape that you have to use one, most likely someone else has to finish the job. That is a very humbling experience!

Not only is that true for physical external dirtiness, but also for spiritual internal dirtiness. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners, have gone against God’s will and have done things that even we are not proud of and had rather no one else know anything about. What would they think of us if they knew how dirty we really are on the inside? Would they still love us? How much more would our sin, if it were known by a holy and just God, make us even more ashamed and reluctant to come to Him for cleansing? Perhaps now we understand Peter’s response a little better.

Most interesting is Jesus’ response to Peter: “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

There are some things that with God’s grace and the abilities that He has given us, we can do for ourselves. Most of us can bathe when our bodies are dirty. We can even choose to clean up our lives, be a better person, change our actions, thoughts, and the way we talk—at least for a little while. We can live in sin and suffer the consequences, we can try to cover them up or hide them from God and everyone else, we can even try to explain them away and convince ourselves that we are good enough people. We assure ourselves that we could never go to hell because our sins aren’t that bad and we have done more good than bad.

The one thing we cannot do for ourselves is cleanse our souls, wash our sins away, and make ourselves acceptable to a holy and just God, to whom we will one day all stand and give an account for our lives. “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God’. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10-12). We will all stand before a sinless God and give an account for our sinfulness! What we are not able to do for ourselves to prepare us for this event, God did for us through the birth, life, death and resurrection of His son Jesus.

No matter how hard we try, no matter how much money we give away, how many people we help, what our successes are in this life, will we ever be ‘good’ enough to get into heaven, to

stand before God and say I am worthy, because of my own efforts. I deserve to stand in your presence and enter into heaven because I am/I have \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank for yourself). There is no acceptable answer that will fill that blank.

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, "I tell you the truth, no one see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again."(vs.3). In verses 5-6, Jesus tells him, "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to the spirit."

Now Nicodemus was no ordinary man. He was a devout Pharisee, a member of the Jewish ruling council, a zealous teacher of the religious law, a defender of the Jewish religion. In man's eyes, he was a respected religious leader with a lot of social and religious power. Yet Jesus told him, there is nothing you can do in the flesh to qualify you to enter the kingdom of God. Being born in the flesh makes you a human being, but being born in the Spirit through faith is what washes your sin away and makes you a child of God.

Later in John 3:16-18, Jesus explains this more clearly to Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." Whenever we are born physically and able to know right from wrong, we will from time to time choose to do what we know is wrong. That choice is sin and makes us a sinner. Our sinfulness condemns us to an eternity in hell unless that sin is forgiven. Because God loves us so much, He sent Jesus to suffer and die in our place, to pay the penalty for our sin. If we really believe that Jesus died for us, and we confess our sin to God and ask Him to forgive us and help us turn from our sinful ways, at that moment we are 'born again' of the Spirit. When we are 'born again' the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts and gives us a sincere desire to live our lives to please God.

We do not need to try to hide our inner or outward filth from an all knowing God who loves us and has already paid the price to forgive our sin. Instead, we need to run to Him and accept His love and forgiveness that He wants so desperately to give us. Instead we need to say like Peter; don't just wash my dirty feet, but wash my hands and my head as well. (Jn 3:9).