

Scraping off the Shit

(A large bowl of water and Towels)

Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later." Peter persisted, "You're not going to wash my feet-ever!" Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing." "Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!" Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean. But not every one of you." (He knew who was betraying him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you.") After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table. Then he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Master,' and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do.

John 13v3-17

Scraping off the shit

Where we walk, we walk in the crap left by others, by ourselves, the mess of human lives, the comings and goings of a wasteful, corrupt and selfish world, we wallow in the dirt and the hurt, oblivious to the stink and the stains that we carry with us. God stripped off his finery, stepped in our shit, knelt in it, touched it, held our ugliest bits in his very hands and washed them clean.

Hands which formed matter; Pulse which set the rhythm of the planets; Breath which stirred life into being; Mind which dreamt the diversity of the species; Eyes which bore deep into the heart of

humanity; Heart which yearns for us to choose peace; Feet that walk each step with us; Mouth which chides and comforts; Arms which embrace the hurting; Strength which sustains the weak; Life which was given up for love; Creator who scrapes the shit off my feet; God who serves.

Wash me clean

Where I judge others
Where I dismiss others
Where I abuse others
Where I ignore others
Where I ridicule others
Where I use others

Wash me clean

Where I elevate myself
Where I think only of myself
Where I want only for myself
Where I gather to myself
Where I hold to myself
Where I value only myself

Wash me clean

Where I seek for power
Where I seek for control
Where I seek for praise
Where I seek for status
Where I seek for fame
Where I seek for wealth

Wash me clean

This story of service and servant-hood begins by washing the feet of each other; we are a community of service, we serve each other, we serve the people we meet on the road, we serve the town in which we live, we serve the servant God, who as the God who became flesh and blood and lived amongst us chose to get right down and dirty in the shit and stink of human life to wash the feet of those he lived with. So we wash each others feet.

[Washing of feet]

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6v8

The challenge for us is that instead of pointing to the rubbish others have accumulated from a place of “holier than thou” judgment, calling them to lift themselves out of the mire, we like Jesus bend and kneel amongst the dirt and the hurt, we get right amongst it, see it up close, feel it, smell it, risk its contamination... and wash the feet of those we serve.

**May I become at all times, both now and forever
A protector for those without protection
A guide for those who have lost their way
A ship for those with oceans to cross
A bridge for those with rivers to cross
A sanctuary for those in danger
A lamp for those without light
A place of refuge for those who lack shelter
And a servant to all in need.**

In that moment at the table Jesus was host and servant, head of the table and servant, honoured guest and lowest member of staff, holy and humble one. Stripping himself of all status and authority he calls us to a humility that flies in the face of modern culture and human logic, to a holiness that follows his pattern, to love in the name of the Servant God.