

You Belong to Me:
April 1, 2021

[Video - Sweet Caroline]

Maundy Thursday is a night...
Full of unpopular ideas.
So. Allow me to add...
To the list.

I do not like the song...
Sweet Caroline.
Never have.

I know. I know the rest of EVERYBODY...
The entire population of the whole world...
Thinks it's the greatest song...
Of all time.

I find it... annoying.

That's just... a personal opinion.
I don't expect anyone to agree with me.
And most importantly...
It's not really relevant...
To anything at all.

Except this.
It's the kind of song...
That gets stuck in your head...
Whether you like it or not.

When it gets to that part...
Sweet Caroline...
Bum. Bum. Bum.
You pretty much...
Have to sing it.

It's almost involuntary.
It's somewhat automatic.
And it just comes out of your face...
Without even trying.

Even if you don't want it to come out...
The words are right there.

I think that happens to us...
More than we want to admit.

There are thoughts and words...
And all kinds of ideas...
That are swirling around...
In this world...

That trigger something automatic...
Inside of us.

There are certain things...
We can't even talk about...
Because people get too angry...
Or too passionate...
Or too full of themselves.
To communicate effectively.

What I'm getting at... is...
It's really hard for us...
To set aside...
Who we are...
What we think...
What we do...

In order to accept...
And fully integrate...
Ideas... that are contrary...
To our unconscious internal workings.

For example.
Washing feet.

Jesus did this...
On the night...
In which he was betrayed.

And it's ok...
That Jesus did it...
But... when we really think about it.
Foot washing...
Is extremely COUNTER-INTUITIVE.

It goes against our internal programming.
Our own idea...
Of who we are...
And what we WANT to do.

This is not fun.
This is not good.

Now listen...
Recently I came across...
A particular bible verse...
That would have been...
So incredibly relevant tonight.

But I can't find it.
I have searched high and low...
And have not been able to find...
This Old Testament reference...

But I remember...
It prohibits people...
From forcing their slaves...
Their servants...
Whom they pay to do...
THE DIRTY JOBS...

The bible says...
You can't make them...
Wash feet.

God says...
You can't force people...
To clean another person's feet.

Because.
Well.. you know.
It's unclean.
It's icky.
It's too degrading.

You get this right?
I mean... if you were here...
In person...

And I said... tonight...
I'm going to invite you come up...
And I'm going to wash your gnarly old icky feet.

Would you really want me to that?
I mean... honestly... in your heart of hearts...

Would you want me to touch your feet?
Would you want me to know...

That you second toe is longer than your big toe?
That you have yellow twisted toenails?
That you have hair growing on your feet...
That make you look like a hobbit?

It's very anxiety invoking.

AND... according to the bible...
This is an action...
That is below...
The work of a servant.

You can't make them do this.

And yet.
There was something key...
Something foundational...
About the nature...
Of the Kingdom of God...

That caused Jesus... **[Water basin]**

To fill a water basin.

To tie a towel around his waist.

To get down...

On his hands and knees...

To tell his disciples...

To take off their sandals...

And come to him...

So HE could wash THEIR feet.

So degrading... right?

I mean so much so...

That Peter... out of a sense of disgust...

LOUDLY OBJECTED.

No LORD.

You are not washing my feet.

You will never wash my feet.

Jesus replied...

Unless you let me do this...

YOU HAVE NO SHARE WITH ME.

You're not a part of me.

You're not a part of my ministry.

You're not a part of the Kingdom.

Unless you let me serve you.

So for Jesus...

It is absolutely clear...

This is a key to understanding...

His way... and his will... and...

The Kingdom of God.

But please don't misunderstand...

It was common... at this time...

For the owner of a home.

To provide a basin...

And some water...

For guests...

To WASH THEIR OWN FEET...

To freshen up... before dinner.

This was a simple courtesy...

All the way back...

To the time of Abraham and Sarah.

But Jesus took it further.

He said... I'm doing this for a reason.

I'm doing this...
Because you need to FIX...
The way you're thinking.

You need to replace...
All those old ideas...
Those old thoughts...
That keep running through your head...

About who you are.
About how you're better than other people.
About how important you are...

And really see those ideas...
As opposed to what it means...
To be my followers.

You need to get rid of all that old garbage.
You need to fight against...
All that automatic thinking.

You think you're too good...
To do the icky things in this life.

You think you're so special...
That you're somehow excluded
From the kind of servanthood...

That expects you... to get down...
On your hands and knees...
And do the really difficult things.

To love people...
Above your own pride...
Above your own preferences...
Above your own ideas...
Above your own self.

To serve each other...
As an expression...
Of your love...
But more importantly...
As an expression of God's love.

Well.. you need to get over yourself.

Because this.
This kind of servanthood...
Is what it means.
To follow me.

This is hard.
What Jesus called us to do...
On Maundy Thursday...

If we really take it to heart...
Is hard.

Because....

Some thoughts...
Some ways of living...
Some choices we make...
Words that we say...
And things that we do...

Clearly DO NOT FIT...
With what Jesus said...
About the Kingdom of God.

And I really feel like...
That in this lesson.
Jesus is holding us accountable.

It's challenging us...
About whether or not...
We are integrating into practice...
What Jesus told us to do.

And we need to be honest about it.

Tonight... we need to be honest.
About whether or not...
We are following Christ.

Because here...
In these words of scripture...
In this event that really happened...
Over 2000 years ago.

There are ideas...
That Jesus gave us...
That are central to our faith.

Servanthood.
Humility.
And sacrificial love.

That's who Jesus was.
And that's who Jesus...
Calls us to be.
Like it or not.

So now... it's up to us.
Each one of us.
To check ourselves...
To see how we're doing.
To test our own thoughts...
Words... and deeds...

Against those of our Lord.

We need to think...
About how we're doing.

And who we are...
In relation to Jesus.

Because as Jesus said.
He is our teacher and our Lord.

And servants are not greater...
Than their master.

And messengers are not greater...
Than the one who sent them.

And then... out of deep...
Sincere...
Sacrificial love...

He said to his friends.
And he still says to us...

I give you a new commandment.
That you love one another.
JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

You also.
Should love one another.

That's how people will know.
That you... BELONG TO ME.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.