

The washing of feet in 2025

Peter stood at the crossroads of two kingdoms. In his hands, he held the remnants of a world he understood: power, position, the sword. Before him knelt Jesus with a basin of water, dissolving that world with each gentle splash.

"Never, Lord," he had protested when Jesus spoke of death. A Messiah does not surrender; he conquers.

"Never, Lord," he protested again at the thought of those sacred hands touching his dusty feet. A Master does not kneel; he commands.

Twice Peter erected walls to preserve the comfortable hierarchies that ordered his universe. Twice Jesus tore them down.

The basin held more than water. It contained revolution. Not the revolution Peter craved, one that would merely replace Roman oppressors with Jewish rulers, but something far more radical: the complete inversion of power itself.

In that upper room, as water dripped from the Creator's fingers onto creature's feet, Jesus wasn't simply performing an act of humility. He was baptizing Peter out of his political imagination. Each droplet washed away layers of assumption about how kingdoms function, about what it means to rule, about the nature of greatness.

Peter wanted to graft God's kingdom onto the skeleton of worldly systems. He dreamed of a divine monarchy that would operate by familiar principles: strength over weakness, authority over submission, glory over shame. A God who would finally play by Rome's rules and win.

Instead, Jesus offered him a kingdom built on the rubble of such systems. A place where the first step toward the throne is a descent. Where crowns are fashioned from thorns. Where the greatest power is the power to lay power down.

This was the painful transformation Jesus worked in Peter, not merely correcting isolated misunderstandings, but systematically dismantling an entire framework for seeing the world. The washing of feet was the washing of eyes. Only when Peter could see differently could he lead differently.

The man who once refused to let his Master serve would one day write to the early church: "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." The man who once rebuked Jesus for speaking of death would eventually follow him to his own cross.

Between these points stretched a journey of unlearning, the gradual, reluctant surrender of a political messiah, and the embrace of a crucified one.

When Jesus told his disciples, "You also should wash one another's feet," he wasn't instituting a ritual of literal foot cleaning. He was commissioning them to continue this revolution. In 2025, we rarely wash actual feet. The basin and towel have become symbols pointing to something deeper: the ongoing work of washing political ideologies from one another's minds.

We face the same temptation Peter faced. The allure of simply clothing Roman skeletons with Jewish jackets remains powerful. We constantly try to graft God's kingdom onto existing power structures. We want to take the world's systems and just put better people in charge. Christians running governments. Believers controlling institutions. The faithful wielding influence. Same skeleton, different flesh.

This approach is seductive because it seems to offer a shortcut. It suggests we can transform the world by simply infusing existing systems with Christian influence. While having believers in positions of influence can certainly be valuable, Peter's mistake was thinking that merely changing who holds power would bring the kingdom Jesus described.

When we wash one another's feet today, we remind each other of what Jesus demonstrated in that upper room. The kingdom doesn't advance primarily through controlling existing power structures, but through embodying an alternative way of using influence and authority. Our service, born from being washed by the Lord ourselves, helps others glimpse the different values and methods that define God's kingdom.

The basin of water still carries revolution. The service Jesus offered was not just humility but liberation--washing our minds from the belief that the kingdom means getting the right people in control. In Peter's day, it was thinking that if Jews controlled government with God's law, it would equal God's kingdom since it would be far more righteous than Roman law. Today we face the same temptation with different labels.

When we serve one another as Jesus served us, we help each other remember that God's kingdom cannot be reduced to religion infused worldly systems. Our acts of humble service remind us that while believers can bring positive influence to existing structures, the

kingdom Jesus described operates by fundamentally different principles. The basin still invites us to this deeper understanding. My question is this: will we accept its revolutionary message or will we echo Peter saying--"Not so, Lord"?

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