

Sunday, September 29, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「He washes his feet」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Acts 26:3~18, John 13:1~11

① **【What it means to be loved】** Verse 1 says, "When Jesus realized that his time had come to pass from this world to the Father, he loved his disciples who were in the world and loved them exceedingly." This happened on Thursday of Passion Week. "His own time of passing from this world to the Father" refers to His death on the cross. Tomorrow I must die on the cross and return to God the Father. There is only a short time left to spend here on earth with the disciples. He loved them there. "He loved his disciples in the world, and he loved them exceedingly" is a tremendous expression. The Orthodox translation of the Nicholas translation is "Love those who belong to him in the world, and love them to the end," the Franciscan translation is "He loved his disciples who are in the world and showed him infinite love," the colloquial translation is "He now showed them the full extent of his love." He showed the height of Christ's love). They all have slightly different translations, but they refer to the quality of love (extreme love) and the time of love (eternal love). It's both. When I read this, I thought that if Christ had a physical body in any age, He would love the Christians of that age in the same way. That's why even today, in 2024, He loves us with the same love in this place called Miyakojima Church. It's not just about loving, it's about loving. Man's love may be good at first, but then it will change and diminish, but the love of Christ does not depend on any human circumstance, and that love does not change no matter what. Moreover, it is a pure and deep love. I don't have anyone I can say that I didn't love. God's love is the same in heaven and on earth, it was 2,000 years ago, and it is still the same today. Even if we don't go to heaven, we can experience God's love on earth. So what exactly did you do? It manifested itself in the form of foot washing.

Jesus glorified the cross, saying, "Now the Son of Man is glorified" (John 13:31). What is glory? It is light and glory. Just as the hidden sun emerges from between the clouds, the appearance of God that has been hidden is called glory. God's love, which had been hidden by the cross, was fully revealed. Because even though He killed His Son, He forgave man. Because He gave the best thing (God's life) to man. That's the height of love. That is why the cross is glorious. The template for this is foot washing. "For the Son of Man came not to serve, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

② **【Washing the feet】** Verses 4~5 say, "He got up from the table, took off his coat, took a washcloth and put it around his waist, and then he washed the feet of his

disciples with water in a tub and began to wipe them with the washcloth he wore around his waist." There is. Jesus was left to only his underwear, a towel hung around his waist, and he filled a tub with water to wash the disciples' feet, and then wiped them with a towel. This is completely me. But Peter doesn't know why the teacher would do this. Then he said, "Lord, will you wash my feet? Never wash my feet" (verses 6 and 8). The Lord replied, "If I do not wash you, you will have nothing to do with me" (verse 8). Peter, impatient, says, "Lord, not only the feet, but also the hands and the head," but the Lord replies, "He who has already washed his body, for his whole body is clean, and he should wash only his feet." (verse 10). In the old days, people who bathed in public baths and cleaned their whole body got dirty only their feet on the way home. Because the road is not paved and you have to wear sandals. In the same way, as long as we live in this world (as long as we have our feet on the ground), we will sin and become unclean. It's inevitable. So how can we be clean? "By the words I have spoken, you have already become clean. (John 15:3). The only Holy One is Christ, and we are purified by hearing His words and becoming one with Him. Preaching, baptism, and the sacrament make us clean. Baptism is the beginning of becoming one with Christ, and the sacrament is a renewal of becoming one. Just as marriage is once, baptism is only once, but the sacrament is continuous. In the Gospel of John, there is no mention of the sacrament, and the washing of the feet takes its place. The sacrament is a cleansing ritual. "Through the blood of his Son, Jesus, we are cleansed from all our sins" (1 John 1:7). Every week, the sacrament washes your feet.

**③ [Salvation is to remain loved]** The Lord replied, "If I do not wash you, you will have nothing to do with me" (verse 8). It's interesting. The only way for man to restore his relationship with God (Christ) is to have God (Christ) wash him. They say that no matter how much a person washes himself, he cannot have a relationship. The religions of this world require human beings to work hard and sacrifice in order to repair their relationship with God. I believe that when we achieve our quotas and become clean, our relationship will be restored. But Christianity is just the opposite. All you have to do is put your dirty feet on Jesus' hands, and surrender your unclean self to Jesus as it is. How simple it is to honestly believe in God's love, to rejoice in what God does for you, and that is salvation. That's what it means to be like a child to enter heaven. Children are beloved geniuses. Be loved, be loved.

● There is a Christian named Yukiya Namba. My husband was a high school teacher named Koichi Namba, but he was stricken with an incurable disease called muscular dystrophy. For 10 years until his death, he gave 50~60 lectures

a year. At the beginning of the disease, Koichi's personality changed. "It was nothing but disappointment for him because he had become incredibly perverse, skeptical, and unimaginably ugly," said his wife, Yukiya, who suffered so much that she thought about divorce, family heart, and suicide. On top of that, the ordeal of my daughter's refusal to go to school and my son's serious illness continued, and eventually I thought, "Nothing good in my life. Damn God," and I can't sleep without drinking. At that time, I came across the words "love is merciful" in Corinthians 13:3 and below. "How hard I have worked for my family, how caring, how much I endured my grandmother, how hard I have worked, how far I have come! I tried not to be praised and criticized, but there was no love. "Love is patient, love is compassionate. I'm not jealous. Love does not boast, does not boast. Do not be disrespectful, do not seek your own gain, do not be frustrated, do not hold grudges.' I don't believe in everything, and I don't endure everything. It's all about me. ... The more I sat down, the more I understood. How important it is in life to know that you are a sinner. The subject changes from "I" to "God". It changes from "living" to "being alive". When such a person felt that he had been forgiven, he was filled with excitement and joy, and he was transformed into one who could not help but tell this God. Above my head is the splendor and the love of God. It's as refreshing as walking on a meadow." Thanks to her husband's disclosure, she hated her husband and knew her own lovelessness and sinfulness. They say that everything was God's plan. At the end, I also left the following words. "If you piece together the points of each trial, you will reach peace, and I believe that the trial is a set of trials until peace."

Yukiya-san's subject has changed from "I to God." "What I did~, I, I~" disappeared, and I saw what God was doing for me. That's when she changed.

● Last week, after the sacrament, I wondered why God loves the world and man. His eyes are too pure to see man's sins, and his ears are too pure to hear man's unclean words. Yet He can stay in this world and relate to humans. I thought that was where salvation lies. You can't count on human love. It's a mood. God's love is the surest of us. When I realized that His love was sustaining this world, my heart warmed.

Yukiya Namba's words, "There was no love," are heavy. We want to be the ones who notice God's love shining brightly on us.