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Footwashing As A Posture Of Life - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/13 21:15

Foot Washing As A Posture of Life
-George Davis

"You shall never wash my feet!" Exclaimed Peter, perhaps uneasy with the thought of Jesus stooping to such menial labor. He simply refused to take part in something so demeaning the dignity, and station of the Messiah. For Messiah would come conquering, not bowing and washing feet like some household slave? Christ's answer to Peter's stubborn refusal was even more perplexing.

"If I do not wash you, you have no part with me". Have you ever wondered why Jesus would say such a thing? Why would Peter's refusal to allow Jesus to wash his feet disqualify him? After all they had been through, was Peter now to be set aside for refusing to extend his feet to the washbasin? Doesn't that seem a bit severe?

When we consider that foot washing is representative of the very Spirit and purpose of Christ's life and ministry we can better understand Christ's insistence upon Peter's involvement. One can have "no part" with Jesus short of their fellowship and participation in the reality that the act of foot washing represents. The creator of all made himself servant of all. Think about what this means! Let us consider again Christ's words to Peter.

"If I do not wash you, you have no part with me"

The Greek word for "have" in this passage is used of those joined by the bonds of natural blood, marriage or friendship. It denotes being closely joined to a person or a thing. The Greek word translated "part" is *meros*, which means a part due or assigned to one - a lot, or destiny. Jesus was saying to Peter, "if I do not wash your feet, you cannot be joined to me in companionship, or share in my purpose and destiny." For Peter would have been going one way while Jesus was going another.

"What I am doing you do not understand" Jesus said, "but you will know after this." Hidden within the example of Christ washing the feet of His disciples was a mystery yet to be revealed - a mystery that contains the secret requirement for usefulness in the Kingdom of God - the requirement for having part with Jesus. What was it that the disciples would "know after this"?

The ramifications of this mystery are far reaching. In fact, it effects every area of our lives. In Philippians 2:5 Paul described this mystery.

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant..." (ASV)

The Form of a Servant

There is a word that is used quite often in the business world today, and that word is "posturing." In fact, I came across a book recently, entitled "Full Scheme Ahead." Written to teach "How to Use Lying, Disinformation, Posturing and Other Proven Scheming Techniques to Manipulate Your Way to the Top." The dictionary defines posturing as,

"An attitude; a pose. A characteristic way of bearing one's body; carriage. Relative placement or arrangement. A stance or disposition with regard to something. A frame of mind affecting one's thoughts or behavior; an overall attitude. To assume an exaggerated or unnatural pose or mental attitude; attitudinize. To assume a pose. To put into a specific posture; pose." (The American Heritage Dictionary)

Posturing is a subtle means of control, which consists of striking a pose and assuming the corresponding attitude and actions. How one sees himself, in terms of placement and arrangement determines the stance or disposition they assume with regard to relationships, forcing others to relate to them within the fanciful perimeters they have set. If one is manipulating their way to the top through posturing their attitude will reflect a sense of superiority, presenting an image of themselves

ves, which reveals both the way they view themselves, and the way they would like to be viewed by others.

The life of Jesus exemplifies the only posture that can rightly be called "Christian."

How did Emanuel - God with us, posture himself? In what form did He come? What mind, attitude, or disposition did He possess? What pose did He assume? What placement did God's Son choose here upon earth? Did He come as a King, to rule and reign? Did He come as a Judge, to pronounce sentence? Let us carefully examine how the one who is "equal with God" carried himself while here on earth.

With the exception of the angelic announcement to the shepherds, and the appearance of a lone star in the eastern skies, His entrance was quiet, humble and undetected. Only the most discerning recognized it. He came into this world in the same way everyone else does. He was born. Emanuel was born among us. He subjected Himself to the vulnerability and weakness of an infant—unable to feed and care for Himself. His place of birth was a town called Bethlehem, one of the smallest "among the thousands of Judah." (Micah 5:2) He was born in a barn, and wrapped in swaddling clothes. His crib was a feeding trough for livestock. He was born into the poor family of a working carpenter. He subjected himself to the natural processes of growth and development, as He grew in stature and in favor with God and man. "There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him." (Isaiah 53:2 NLT) He honored His earthly father and mother. And like any other child He played with the rest of the children. He never owned a home. Although He had no sin, He entered the same waters, as did the rest of Israel, in John's baptism of repentance. Though He was God, He emptied Himself of that prerogative, taking on the posture, and form of a servant. He shunned the appearance of greatness, at least, as the world perceives greatness. They would have made him king but He hid himself. He refused to be lifted up, except upon the cross of Calvary. He did not seek popularity. In fact, He did the opposite in instructing His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah. He "made Himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). And at last, when He rode into Jerusalem in what is now called "The Triumphal Entry" He did not come sitting arrogantly astride a great white stallion. No! He came meek and lowly sitting on the back of a donkey. So you see, for Jesus to take the lowest place was nothing new. This was the story of His life. And in keeping with all that had preceded the events in the upper room Emanuel continued to take the lowest place—the place of a household servant, washing feet. This is why those who will not involve themselves in service "have no part with Him."

It is clear that Jesus' words to Peter "If I do not wash you, you have no part (portion, destiny) with me" were an invitation to participate in the life and ministry He had modeled.

In the world around us posturing is done to jockey for positions at the top, assuming an attitude of superiority exuding an air of competence and credibility for the purpose of advantage. It is not surprising to find this kind of ambition in the world, but when God's children employ this worldly means, to advance themselves, it is disconcerting, for in doing so the example of the Servant Christ is desecrated.

For the next few moments we will consider a few of the world's posturing tools that have been adopted by the church.

Lights, camera, action!

Today's Christianity has become a staged event. Its gatherings are productions, directed and arranged in advance, to produce a specific effect. In many cases they are little more than theatrical performances. One such Church used a special light, used by those who engage in public speaking, which shone from across the room directly on the face of the "pastor" as he spoke. I asked this pastor why this was done. "It removes the shadows from your face and shadows make you appear insincere and devious" he replied. It was the latest technology, so why not use it?

One of the most effective posturing tools in today's church is the stage/platform. For it visually elevates the one over the many, further facilitating the flawed clergy/laity distinction. Which advances the notion that ministry is a specialized field, off limits to the average believer. Every time these professionals ascend the platform it is a reminder and fortification of their dubious right to rule. It is all posturing for effect. You cannot find this example in the life of Christ. And those who posture themselves so have no "part" with the Servant Christ. They have assumed another posture and destiny all together. They rise to take on the form of greatness, which the world admires. They posture themselves as rulers, and seek renown and popularity through honorific titles. This is an affront to Christ's example, and teaching. (Matthew 23:8-12.)

Another way that men posture themselves is by the use of titles.

Honorific Titles

Below are a few of the aggrandizing titles, which are commonly used to enhance the supposed status and position of the few over the many.

"Pope" "Cardinal" "Reverend" "Doctor" "Minister" "Pastor" "Bishop" "Elder" "Deacon" and so forth.

Titles are powerful posturing tools, implying unbiblical ideas. O that men would finally grasp our Saviors teaching on this all-important matter!

"They (Scribes and Pharisees) tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassel s on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them `Rabbi.' But you are not to be called `Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth `father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called `teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to..." (Mt.23:4-13) NIV

People tend to relate to a person according to the way they present themselves. Imagine yourself being introduced to someone in the following manner. "I would like you to meet Apostle, Prophet, Doctor, Pastor, Reverend, Brother Wonderful." Few can help but curtsy to such greatness. When someone is introduced to you with honorific titles, it is usually for the purpose of selling you on their superiority. In Christ's day posture demonstrated status, and position. Bowing and prostrating in a show of deference was common. If you were a king you would expect that all your subjects would pay homage by bowing before you. This process was aided by the use of superlatives. The same worldly means of intimidation was used, on a grander scale, in the apostate Church. Here are a few examples, taken from "The Cardinal's Oath, omni conatu persecuturum et impugnaturum."

"Our Most Holy Lord the Pope and his successors"
"the Pontifical Majesty and person"
"the Holy Roman Bishop our Lord the Pope"
"the Holy Pontiff Sixtus"

Whether it's "the Pontifical Majesty and person" or "Reverend Bob," it's the same thing. Bob's title is a little less impressive, but it has much the same effect. Reverend Bob simply represents a protestantized and somewhat watered-down version of the very same error.

Another effective posturing tool is clothing, or in religious circles, vestments

Vestments- Do the Clothes Make the Man?

To kings, judges, and clergy the robe is a symbol of majestic authority, designed to inspire reverence, respect, dread, and wonder. The problem is, anyone can wear the robe and assume the posture and it will have the same effect. The titles and the vestments have their own mystique.

Paul exhorted that the "mind", which was in Christ Jesus should alone set the tenor in the Christian community. Refusing to compete and exalt oneself, was to be the norm, not the exception. The only place of true unity is at the bottom, in the community scrambling for the lowest chair.

"... take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, `Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Lu.14:10-11)

Individuals that intimidate through titles and vestments are attempting to take the highest chair. Thinking more highly of themselves than they should, (Romans 12:3) they see themselves as superior to others. (See Phil.2:3)

Should it be thought exceptional for a man who is postured over God's children to have it said of him "He has a servant's heart"? If ever there was a contradiction of terms, this is. For his "servant's heart" is impugned by his posturing. The real question is, does he have a servant's form? Has he made himself of no reputation? Has he emptied himself of the an

bition to climb? Does he take the lowest seat, or canonize himself by the use of vestments, suits, and titles, which set him apart from the rest of the body of Christ? Does he take the form of a servant? That is the real test of the heart. Not only does the Lord detest a proud heart, but also a "proud look."

The only vestment that Jesus wore was when the governor's soldiers took Him into the common hall, where they stripped him, and placed on him a "scarlet robe."

The only crown that adorned His brow was a "crown of thorns" shaped and forced upon his head by the same Roman hands. For a scepter, they placed a reed in his right hand. Then bowing before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spit upon him, and took the reed, and struck him on the head. This is as close to being an earthly king as our Lord ever got.

The End of Ambition

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-30)

How will Jesus give us rest? We will find rest in His gentleness and meekness; it will mean the end of our ambition to rise. In this way we shall learn of Him, or we shall "have no part" with Him. For this is our portion! This is His yoke that we should share in His meekness, and in His lowly "form." The effect of embracing His "heart" is the end of private ambition. Soul-rest—no more anxiety over frustrated goals, and the tedium of the climb to the top. What is the yoke that He asks us to share with Him? What is it that He asks us to have "part" with Him in? It is His meekness, lowliness, His "mind" - His "form" - His humility - His "Cross" - His life.

Do we really want to have part with Jesus? Do we really want to know Him in the "fellowship of His suffering," to "fill up that which is lacking" in the suffering of Christ? Taking up our cross and following Him? Do we truly desire to yoke with Him?

We must cease our posturing and take the lowest seat for from His birth to the cross this was His lot, His portion, and His destiny. We must assume the posture of the lowly Christ, as servants! Not in word but "form." This is the example He gave us. We have a leadership role, only as long as we are yoked to the lowly Christ. Then and only then, are we in step with Him, His purpose, and His "heart." Only then do we truly have part with Him.

Re: Footwashing As A Posture Of Life - posted by Clutch (), on: 2004/4/14 10:29

Bishop Chanin,

I think that I can speak for everyone that follows this web site; and certainly those who do not, but are facing the small end of the wind sock at the Cincinnati Airport. THANK YOU ! For washing your feet. After all foot washing is one of the three ordinances of the church, besides Baptism, and Communion.

As head of the CACF, you have done the right thing, and brought your congregations into knowledge of the truth. Perhaps this revelation will explain some of the unusual phenomena surrounding services at the CACF (falling down, making unintelligible sounds, and faces changing colors,etc.).

Almost everywhere outside Kentucky, folks wear what they call SHOES(pronounced shooze). In between foot washings, they put " Odor Eaters " in them and put them on their feet. It's important that you know, that you must wash your feet BEFORE putting on Odor Eaters. If you don't you might disappear. I lost two brothers that way.

Down here in Georgia we have another title they call us religious potentates -" Bubba".Wanna see my tattoo of Mary Queen of Scots'? :-P

Bubba Clutch :-D

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/4/14 10:48

Quote:
-----As head of the CACF, you have done the right thing, and brought your congregations into knowledge of the truth. Perhaps this revelation will explain some of the unusual phenomena surrounding services at the CACF (falling down, making unintelligible sounds, and faces changing colors, etc.).

Brother Clutch I would ask that you tone it down and don't be so frivolous about serious matters such as this phenomena. Christianity is life and death and its a sad thing to be laughing in a day when the church should be mourning.

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/14 10:58

Clutch

Ha Ha! There are many Bubbas around here too.

Actually there was a time when my own pride and lack of foot washing kept me from admitting I lived in Kentucky. Praise the Lord He had it in His plans to move us here. It has done wonders for my humility. And I really mean this!

I came from a wealthy background and grew up that way. I see how money can really keep people from the kingdom- not just the money but the pride of life that comes along with it. Thinking that you are better than others in some way. Or "oh, poor things- they don't know any better!"

Now I see that I was poor (in spirit) and so were the rest of the wealthy people I left behind. I am much richer and "cleaner" now that i am just a hillbilly. :-D

I was so blind (even though I was a "Christian") and now I see. Amazing grace!!!!!!

Thankful for His ways of humbling, Chanin

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/4/27 19:11

Footwashing, that is a good way to describe servanthood, the Christian life.

Think of others, think of ways, even creative ways, to help other people. As a homemaker, I clean a lot for others. I even clean up my teenage brother and sister's rooms sometimes. When we are doing things for others, it seems God does things for us. Not that I want or expect God to do anymore than He already has, this is just an encouragement. Forget yourself, do for others without expecting anything in return. That is one aspect of true love. Spend time doing something with someone else, if you don't enjoy it, that's even more sacrificial and loving than if you did enjoy it.

Get the attention off yourself, think of others, help others, serve others, as Jesus did, and God will take care of you.

Keep your life in balance, but let's make sure we spend some of our energy doing things for those around us to show we love them, without expecting anything in return. Doing physical work like that is a reward in itself. Do things that will help someone else lighten their load, we are servants, remember.

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/4/27 20:05

Oilpainter,

You are so right here. It's the simple things that we do- but not many want to do what is simple and unseen.

I remember reading the biography of Oswald Chambers- during a big tent revival meeting he wrote (journalled) all the great things that were happening.

"One thing that will remain with us as long as we live was not the preaching, not the meetings, nor the marches, nor testimonies (these were grand) but the splendid, **Supereffacing service** of the students who **waited tables, washed th**

e dishes, erected tents, pulled them down and did the drudgery.

Their lives for ten days were one **unbroken testimony** to the blessing of God and to at least, the impression grew strong, that if our Lord were here, **He would still be hidden and obscure as ONE WHO SERVED.**

Walking with Him, Chanin

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/4/28 22:09

This thread and this forum is such a blessing.

Dear God, thank you for this forum and these brothers and sisters who love You and honor You and exalt You. In Jesus' name, Amen.