

The cup of salvation

If you have attended as many love feasts as I have, it is likely you have heard it said that the reason Jesus washed the feet of his disciples was because none of them were willing to stoop low enough to be a humble servant. This is a powerful story and is consistent with Jesus calling us all to serve one another.

This version of the story is highly unlikely. For one thing, John's Gospel tells us that "Jesus got up from table" before washing feet. Culturally, it is unacceptable for anyone to enter a building or sit at a table without first washing the dust off one's feet. There are many places in the world today where everyone leaves shoes outside. It was similar in Jesus' day and his disciples were also part of this culture.

More than thirty years ago, while planning a love feast service, I decided to follow the biblical story of the feetwashing and start with the meal. Feetwashing occurs after the meal so that everyone, like Jesus, can get up from table. In all my years as a pastor, I have used this order of service, no one has complained, and most prefer it.

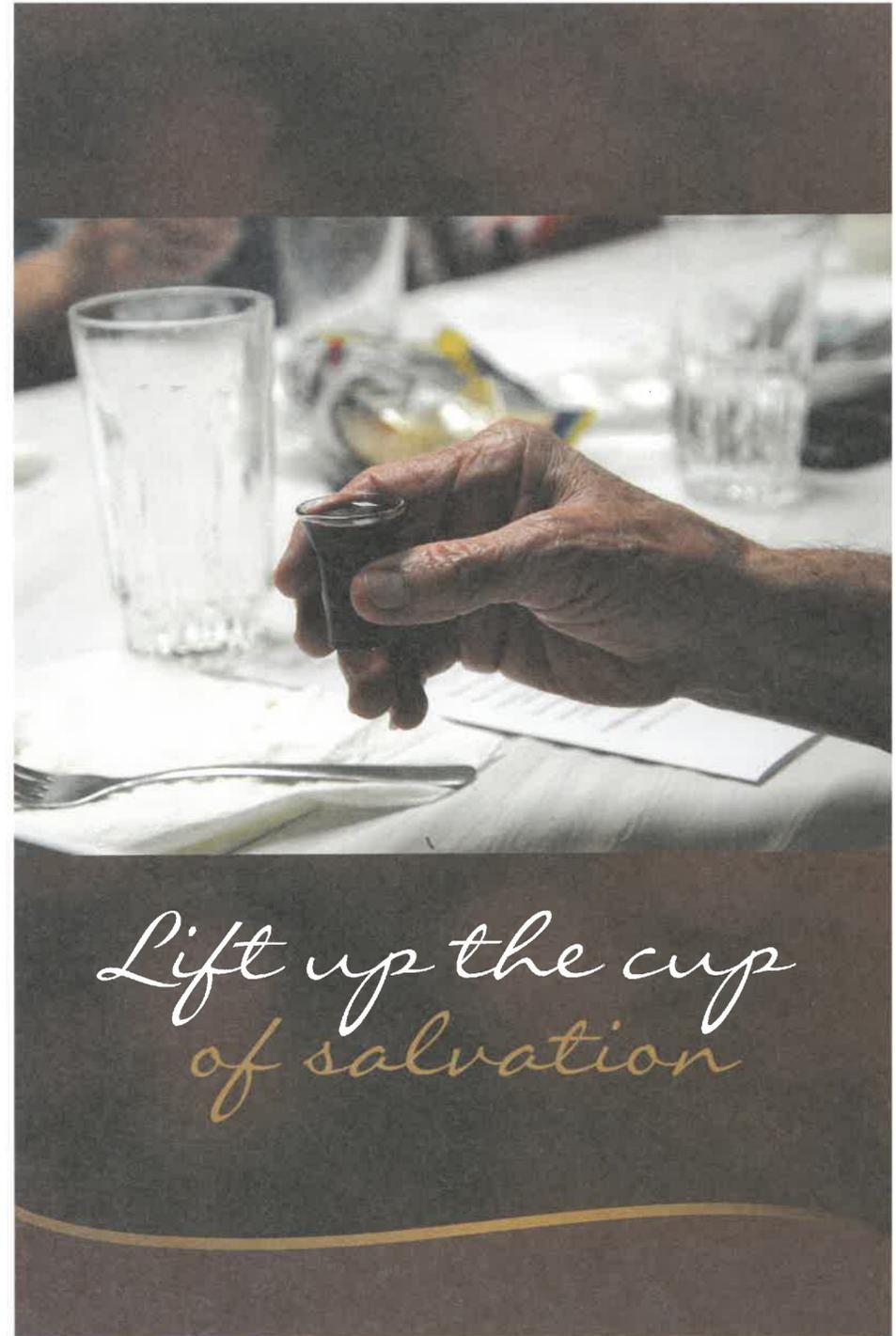
I have come to believe that Jesus' reason for washing the feet of his followers is to commission them for their journey ahead. Our feet move us into the world and Jesus still invites us to go forth and share the good news. Our love feast ritual is an act of commissioning one another for the days and the work ahead.

Be assured that it does not matter *how* we do love feast as long as we *do* it. Jesus always beckons us to join him on the journey and the journey is long. Come and go to be blessed.

—Duane Grady
Goshen, Indiana

"I will *lift up the cup of salvation* and call on the name of the LORD;" (Psalm 116:13, *NRSVue*). **Today's Bible readings from the lectionary:** Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35.

April 17, 2025, Love Feast. Photo © Donna Parcell. Used by permission.
Living Word Bulletin Series © 2025 Brethren Press. Printed in the USA.



CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:00 PM

Love Feast

April 17, 2025

WELCOME

INVOCATION

HYMN #450

"Here in our upper room"

[Verse 1]

*Here in our upper room with you, around your hallowed table,
Lord, may we with deep humility fulfill the precepts of your word.*

[Verse 2]

*As you our bless'd Example, taught, we kneel to serve our neighbor's need,
the cleansing of your Spirit sought in heart and mind, in thought and deed.*

[Verse 3]

*We share with you the feast of love as hearts are knit in one accord.
Oh, may your Spirit in us move our wills to love you more, dear Lord.*

[Verse 4]

*With heart, and not with hands alone, we keep the ordinance anew,
and through these sacred symbols prove in serving others we serve you.*

Examination and Confession

LITANY OF PREPARATION AND SELF EXAMINATION

*All: When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they
had taken their places and were eating, Jesus, said, "Truly I tell you,
one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me. They began to
be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?"*

One: Lord, we confess that we who call ourselves your children some
times betray you. Some of us are unwilling to see those around us
who are hurting.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us run after the things of this world rather than the things of
your kingdom.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us insist on our own way, unwilling to listen and discuss
openly with our brothers and sisters who have different opinions.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us have neglected opportunities you have given us to be
your witnesses.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us have failed to use the gifts and talents that you have
given us to serve your church.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us have not kept a place in our busy daily schedules to be
with you in prayer, Bible reading and meditation.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: Some of us have said and done things to hurt others, and have not
worked to heal the brokenness.

All: Lord, is it I?

One: All of us have failed in many times and ways to be your people,
your church.

All: Forgive us, Lord.

One: All of us need cleansing, renewal, a fresh anointing of your Holy
Spirit.

*All: Help us to put you first, Lord! Empower us to be your church: serving,
loving, forgiving, healing, witnessing, praising, rejoicing in you!*

SILENT REFLECTION

Service of Feetwashing

SCRIPTURE READING

John 13:1-17

NT 107

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had
come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own
who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it
into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper
Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he
had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his
outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a ba-
sin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that
was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are
you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I
am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never
wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with
me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and
my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need (Continue)

to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

HYMN #307 *"Will you let me be your servant"*

[Verse 1]

*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.*

[Verse 2]

*We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.*

[Verse 3]

*I will hold the Christ light for you in the nighttime of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.*

[Verse 4]

*I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.*

[Verse 5]

*When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.*

[Verse 6]

*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.*

REFLECTION

RESPONSIVE READING

One: The love of Christ has gathered us as one, to remember Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loved his own until the end.

All: *In his great, unselfish love, the Master who calmed the storms and turned water into wine, stooped to do a servant's duty and washed his disciples' feet.*

One: When we are gathered here, let us be drawn together by his passion. Let no pride dismiss his model, let no love be less than his.

All: *Let us follow Christ's example and demonstrate the service by which we show love for one another. For by this, the world will know that we are Christ's disciples, if we love one another.*

PRAYER

FEETWASHING

"When I survey the wondrous cross" #259

[Verse 1]

*When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.*

[Verse 2]

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them through his blood.*

[Verse 3]

*See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

[Verse 4]

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.*

"Lord, I want to be a Christian" #444

[Verse 1]

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

[Verse 2]

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

[Verse 3]

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

(Continue)

[Verse 4]

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

“O Love that will not let me go” #577

[Verse 1]

O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee.

I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

[Verse 2]

O Light that follows all my way, I yield my flick’ring torch to thee.

My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine’s blaze its day may brighter,
fairer be.

[Verse 3]

O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee.

I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.

[Verse 4]

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee.

I lay in dust, life’s glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red,
life that shall endless be.

“Breathe on me breath of God” #356

[Verse 1]

Breathe on me, breath of God. Fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

[Verse 2]

Breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

[Verse 3]

Breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

[Verse 4]

Breathe on me, breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

The Agape Meal

SCRIPTURE READING John 15:9-17

NT 109

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

REFLECTION

BLESSING HYMN #457 “Be present at our table, Lord”

[Verse 1]

Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and ev’ry where adored.

These mercies bless and grant that we may feast in paradise with thee.

[Verse 2]

We thank thee, Lord, for this, our food, for life, and health, and ev’ry good.

Let manna to our souls be giv’n the bread of life sent down from heav’n.

THE MEAL

Bread and Cup Communion

SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 53:1-6

OT 6

Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant,

and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by others;

a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;

and as one from whom others hide their faces

he was despised, and we held him of no account.

(Continue)

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

REFLECTION

TEMPLE CHOIR "This Bread, This Cup" (Arr. Larson)

COMMUNION

Unison Affirmation for the bread:

"The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ."

Unison Affirmation for the cup:

"The cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ."

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Sending

CLOSING COMMENTS

*SENDING HYMN #421 "Bless'd be the tie that binds" (vss. 1,2,3,4)

[Verse 1]

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

[Verse 2]

*Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.*

[Verse 3]

*We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear,
and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.*

[Verse 4]

*When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.*

*BENEDICTION

*Thank you to our Deacons and volunteers for making
preparations for this Love Feast service.*

The offering collected today will be given to the Good Samaritan Fund.
