

Sermon
Synod Assembly – June 12, 2010
Romans 10:11-17

Who chose our scripture for this morning? How did you know? Know what? That I am a pastor with a thing about feet. Just ask Pastor Bob Berg, he was the bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin at the time of my ordination. In the message he preached for my ordination service he asked, “Do you have a thing about feet, Dawn?” That was 8 years ago, and I still have a thing about feet. I expect I will always have a thing about feet. Why did he ask such a question? The gospel lesson I chose for my ordination service was John 13, the account of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Just ask the congregation at American Lutheran in Jesup, they’ll confirm what I’m saying. In fact, Mary and Maureen are here with me today. Do I speak the truth?

So I have a thing about feet, but why? Because feet are beautiful. My thing for feet began long before I was ordained. As a student nurse, nurse’s aide, graduate nurse, and eventually a registered nurse I washed many feet. I wonder now, just how many. As a delivery room nurse I had the great privilege of doing the foot prints of many newborns. I also did 3-D molds of the feet of stillborn babies and gave them to grieving parents. The detail was amazing, every crease captured for them to touch and feel. How beautiful are the feet of newborns, soft and creased in just the right places. How beautiful is God’s creative work.

As a mother of three I have played “This little piggy went to market” and removed the fuzz between my children’s toes I raised their feet to my wrinkled nose and said, “pewwww”. I have dried my children’s wrinkled feet after a long playful bath. As a granddaughter I have observed and even winced at my grandmother’s arthritic feet, the huge bunion at the base of her big toes; her big toes were so gnarled they rested under her other toes. And yet, how beautiful were my grandmother’s feet. I say my grandmother’s feet were beautiful not because of their physical appearance, but rather because of the

many things she taught me as she walked the walk of faith.

Am I the only one who has a thing for feet? I think not. It seems that the Prophet Isaiah also had a thing for feet. He wrote “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’” The Apostle Paul did as well. In our scripture reading this morning Paul quotes Isaiah, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.” The Greek word Paul uses for beautiful here is one of several words used for beautiful. We might also translate it as welcome. How welcome upon the mountain are the feet of the messenger announcing peace, bringing good news, announcing salvation. How welcome are the feet of those who bring good news.

Even Jesus had a thing for feet. When he sent his disciples out to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons he gave them these instructions, “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.” How beautiful the feet of these sent to bring God’s saving word. They spoke God’s word with their tongues. God’s word lived in their hearts. How beautiful.

On the night before his death Jesus took it a step further. He did more than give verbal instructions about feet, he took hold of his disciples’ feet. He washed each and every one. Only Peter is named in the foot washing account, yet we can assume Jesus washed the feet of all his disciples, including the feet of James and John – the sons of Zebedee who asked to sit in seats of honor in glory with Jesus – one at his right and one at his left, including the feet of Peter who promised he would lay down his life for Jesus and yet the very next day would deny Jesus three times, including the feet of Judas who betrayed Jesus with a kiss, including the feet of the other disciples who out of fear for their own lives deserted Jesus and hid behind locked doors. Yes, our savior had/has a

thing for feet!

Even Handel's Messiah includes the composition, *How Beautiful Are the Feet*. Based on this morning's text Handel wrote, "How beautiful are the feet of them: that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. How beautiful are the feet of them: that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." All the feet of those who speak the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things are beautiful. Are your feet beautiful? Messengers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, your feet are beautiful. Our feet are beautiful, washed daily as we live out our baptismal calling in our lives proclaiming Christ through word and deed, caring for others and the world God made, working for justice and peace so that all with ears may hear the good news of salvation through Jesus. Our feet are made beautiful by the feet of another, the one who was despised and rejected, a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity. . . . he bore our infirmities and carried our diseases. . . . wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, his punishment made us whole and by his bruises we are healed.

In her song, "How Beautiful" Twila Paris wrote about our Lord's beautiful feet. She wrote, "How Beautiful the feet that walked the long dusty roads and the hill to the cross." Indeed, how beautiful are the wounded feet of Christ, who bore our sins on the cross making salvation possible for all who believe in him. By his wounds we are healed. By his wounds we are made whole. By his wounds we are made beautiful. We anticipate one day we will behold his beautiful feet. One day we will kneel at his beautiful feet like the woman in the city, the sinner who washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. We long to hear him speak to us the words he spoke to her. "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Peace." Until that day we walk the walk of faith.

In addition to writing about our Lord's feet Twila also wrote about our feet. Her words echo those of the Prophet Isaiah and the Apostle Paul. "How beautiful the feet that bring the sound of good news and the love of the king." In her words, "How beautiful is

the body of Christ.” How beautiful is the body that was bruised, broken, pierced for our sake. How beautiful is the body of Christ given and shed for you, for me, for all people for the forgiveness of sins. How beautiful are we, for we too are the body of Christ.

Beautiful body of Christ, let all with ears to hear listen. Listen. Hear now the glad tidings of good things. The Word that saves is right here, as near as the tongues in our mouths, as close as the hearts in our chests. If we confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved. No one who believes in Jesus Christ will be put to shame. He is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How beautiful. How beautiful. How beautiful.