

I Have Given You an Example
A Maundy Thursday Meditation
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

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“Do you know what I just did?” He said. “I have given you an example you will *never* be able to unsee. Love one another – as I have loved you! Did you hear Me? *As I have loved you.* All of you. Even the ones who betray you to sanctified murderers. Love them also. How? Oh, not by giving up whatever power you have, the unearned privilege you were born into. No, nothing that easy. A new commandment I give to you: *redirect* it! Use the power you have to *clean up the crap of this world.*”

Look, what else do you think the slaves washed off the feet of guests, who walked the same roads as oxen, horses, and asses? No wonder Peter objected so violently! Leaders just do not put their hands on that stuff! But see “the Word *was* God,” wrapped in a “Motel 6” towel, kneeling like a slave, up to His elbows in our gunk. “I have given you an example that you will not be able to unsee. Follow it. You disciples who have followed me, now gathered around this sacred Passover meal memorializing the liberation of slaves from Egypt’s iron boot. You followers who circle this holy table shedding a fond tear for “Jesus who died for me...” Who engage in yearly Christian cosplay, scrubbing manicured feet. No, no: this is a *revolution* you are sparking here. Show this dog-eat-dog world what *divine* leadership really looks like! *Realize* the power that God has given you: male, female, educated, comma-in-your-checkbook, able-bodied, arthritic, straight, non-binary, traumatized by domestic violence.... *Your bruises are your power.* For you *know* what it is like to be oppressed – and you know what life *should* look like! That is your power. *Use* your power by getting down on your knees, on the level of those who’ve been ground down, eye-to-eye. Take the power you have, and find your God-given role cleaning up the crap in this world. Suffer with those who suffer without turning away, as your holy act. Write scathing letters to legislators beating up on transgender girls. Call out the snide racist comments at family gatherings. Buy an extra case of water & bring it to church. Write that check to that group pushing to make a better world. Model compassion to your children. Play your part, whatever it is. Dare to hope that God can use whatever you’ve got – and it *will* be “good enough.”

“Do you know what I have done?” asked Jesus. What I have *already* done, echoing now in *this* space, April 14, 2022? I have given you an example, that you can never unsee. And . . . I have given you the *power* to follow that example. Amen.