

I Am Allergic To Feet

Sermon Title: **I Am Allergic To Feet**

Sermon Number: **6520**

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Leigh McMutry: We have to let go of our pride and meet people at the point of their need.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:20 - 00:00:50)

And now for 6520, "I Am Allergic To Feet."

Leigh McMutry: We would like to welcome each of you to Brothers of the Word because, brother and sister, you need the Word.

Amen. If you would, please, if you're old-school like me, you can turn in your Bible. If you're new-school, you can pull out your device. If you would, please turn to John chapter 13, verses 1 through 17. It's a familiar passage. It's John the 13th chapter, versus 1 through 17, and I will actually be reading the NIV. Again, that's John 13:1 through 17, and when you have it just say, "Amen."

Audience: Amen.

Leigh McMutry: It says, "It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Well, Jesus answered and said, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

“Okay, Lord,” Simon Peter said, “in that case, go on and wash my hands and my head as well!”

Jesus answered and said, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet. Their whole body is already clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

So, I will use for a subject this morning, “I Am Allergic To Feet.”

Now, before I get started, let me go ahead and calm most of your nerves that are excited and for those who might be nervous. The answer is, “No.” Absolutely not. I’m not about to wash nobody’s feet. Don’t untie your shoes. Don’t sniff your socks to see how long you’ve had them. Don’t pull out your lotion, trying to hit your ankles one good time. Don’t pull out a knife trying to saw down your toenails. They were masked for a reason when you get a pedicure. So, we’re good. I’m not going to be washing your feet today.

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus wasn’t certain that the disciples understood what he meant in Verse 14 when he said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” He was saying, “I want you to be like me.”

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It was a spiritual example he was setting, observing others and having humility no matter what position you find yourself in. He was demonstrating that if he holds the highest position in history and can wash feet, then there's no need that others may have on this earth that we should not try to fill. After Peter says, "No. You can't wash my feet," Jesus says, "Well, if I don't, you have no part with me." Peter did, like most of us would, "All right, then, well, I got some more body parts you can start washing."

It wasn't so much that Peter didn't understand that his hands and head were already clean and didn't need to be washed that caught my attention. It was why didn't he say, "Well, after you wash my feet, can I help you, Jesus, wash the feet of the others?" or "May I then wash your feet, Lord?" And just like Peter, I think there's at least three reasons why we think we are allergic to feet.

The first reason is our pride. My close friend, Reverend Melissa Poke(ph) was actually here today. Last week, she preached a sermon where she uses her subject, "My Posture Is Not My Position." Now, although she used a different scripture reference and that, bless my soul, the point she was making still works here. What she was saying is the posture of Jesus kneeling and washing feet of somebody else did not negate his position in the kingdom. The washing of feet in the Scripture was Jesus responding to the disciples' prideful debate of who was the greatest among them. He was demonstrating that the greatest among us are those who are willing to change their prideful posture, knowing that the change in posture does not reflect a change in their position.

Now, this is a tricky scripture because foot-washing is a tradition in a lot of churches. If we're not careful, it can lead to a prideful show misrepresenting Jesus's point. You see, some churches say, "We're going to have a foot-washing service. So, clean your feet before you come, and wear clean socks and clean shoes."

Well, see, washed feet don't need to be washed. We've got to stop trying to save the saved. The Great Commission says to seek and save, not swap and trade. We add nothing to the kingdom of God when, say, people lead one church just to join another.

We only add the kingdom when someone comes out of the world and into the knowledge of Christ. We sit and wait for sinners to show up at church. “Come on, I am not going out there. They could come in here.” We’re commissioned to go and tell, not say “Come and hear.” Just as Jesus was kneeling that night, we have to let go of our pride and meet people at the point of their need.

The second reason I think we’re allergic to feet is just because of people. It reminds me of the story of the kindergarten teacher and Johnny. The kindergarten teacher had been struggling in her ability to show grace to this one kid in her kindergarten class. He wasn’t bad, he was just busy. You all know that five-year-old.

One Sunday, after the pastor preached, “Be patient with one another as Christ has been to you,” she decided she would change her attitude. So, she prayed, “Lord, give me patience tomorrow when I go to work, specifically with Johnny.” Well, her Monday was going great. Amazingly, Johnny was being an angel. She thought, “Wow! Either Johnny is being really good or I’m being so patient. I don’t know he’s being bad.”

She was so grateful that God had answered her prayer so quickly, in such a dramatic way that when her class went to recess, she started posting, “Won’t he do it!” on all of her social media. She was talking about how God had delivered her from being impatient with Johnny and how she had learned to show grace.

The day was coming to an end in her class. They were putting on their shoes, and their coats, and their scarves, and their mittens. Well, she glanced over and little Johnny was just struggling to get his boots on. She smiled. She was like, “Oh! I’m going to go help him because this means I have conquered the day.”

Before she could get to him, in his sweet, helpless little voice he said, “Um, teacher? Can you help me put my boots on?” She said, “Of course, Johnny.” But with her pulling and him pushing, the boots didn’t seem to want to go on and she worked up a sweat and everything. But finally, they got the second boot on and Johnny said, “Um, teacher, they’re on the wrong feet.” She looked down and, sure enough, they were on the wrong feet.

She was like, “Oh, okay. I see you Lord. I know what you’re trying to do. I got you, I got this.” So, it wasn’t any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them back on. But they struggled and they managed to get them back off and then put them back on. She kept her cool as they worked together. He then said, “Teacher, these aren’t my boots.” Now you’ll know that’s one of the unsafe stuff start creeping in your mind. But she bit her tongue and rather than getting right in his face and say, “Why didn’t you tell me so?” Like she wanted to, she decided, “I’m going to help him.”

So, she struggled, she pulled the bad fitting boots off his feet and as soon as she pulled them off, he said, “But these are the ones I’m supposed to wear. They’re my brother’s shoes and we couldn’t find mine this morning.” She was like, “Dear heavenly Father, while we were just sinners Christ died for us.” She just started praying until she mustered up enough grace and courage. She made sure she was putting them on the right feet. She wrestles so hard to get those boots back on his feet again. As anger was kind of sterned up in her, the little boy said, “Thank you so much teacher for your patience and for helping me.” She said, “You’re welcome. Now run and get your mittens because it’s cold outside.” He said, “I stuck them in the toes of my boots.”

Needless to say, she was arrested by four, booked by five and it was the top news story by six because that’s how it goes sometimes. We want to be like Christ. We want to love unconditionally. We want to be patient but sometimes the wrong people just take all the baptism water out of the pool before we get a chance to get dipped. They just make us angry when we see their name on a piece of paper. And we realize how often we take for granted that Jesus was perfect. He was our savior because he became like us, like flesh but withstood those tricks of the devil. So, we all have a little Johnny in our life, the problem is he’s not five anymore. Most of our little Johnny’s are 40 and they call you and say, “Can you get me a ride to the grocery store just for a minute?” You get in your car and you drive the 10 minutes to pick your little Johnny up and then you drive the 20 minutes to get them to the store and he like, “Can I hold a couple of dollars?”

And you do it. You let him hold some money and then you see him the next day with a new car, a new haircut, iPhone 30. He still owes you \$20 and he got a new pair of teeth. And he’s out there tendered by -- “He wouldn’t even help me. Only gave me

\$20.” And we get mad. And listen to what we say. We say, “Don’t call me no more. Don’t look at me. Keep my name out your mouth. I hope everything you have catches on fire.” We say this because we quickly forgot we’re doing the same thing to Jesus. Think about it. We say, “Lord, enlarge my territory.” In other words, “Take me to a different place.” And when we’re there, we ask him for money. We say, “Lord, open up the windows of heaven and pour me out of bliss and I don’t have room enough to receive.” And after he does that for us, you all know what we do? We won’t tire, won’t bless nobody, won’t thank him, won’t call him, won’t read.

We show everybody what we got but we don’t speak to him again until we need him. So, what if he did us like we did our friend? What if he says, “Don’t call me, don’t look to me. Keep my name out your mouth. I hope everything you have catches on fire.” Now you all know if you don’t make it to heaven, everything is going to catch on fire. What if Jesus didn’t have patience with us? You have to help people any way. See the world only loves those who love them. We’re called to love those who spitefully use us. The final reason I think that we’re allergic to feet is because we are afraid of persecution. Persecution comes with saying yes to Jesus. You have to understand you have two adversaries. Both of them are working against you but one of them is a secret agent working for God.

So, let’s look at Jesus. The religious folks were being mean to Jesus. They were lying on him for no reason. He was an innocent man. They wanted to get rid of him. They wanted to push him to the cross and crucify him. But that’s the thing. They didn’t know the cross was his briar-patch. Now, I remember the story of brother rabbit and brother fox. And the fox had set a trap for the rabbit. And when the rabbit got stuck --

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-- in tar baby, the fox comes out of the woods and he starts laughing. He says, “Ha, what should I do with you rabbit?” And he says, “You can burn me, you can kill me, you can eat me but please, please don’t throw me into the briar-patch.” The fox laughed and said, “Well then, that’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to throw you into the briar-patch.” When he threw him into the briar-patch the rabbit landed and he just started laughing so hard. And the fox said, “Wait! I thought you didn’t want to go in

the briar-patch?" He said, "I tricked you again." He said, "See, I was born and raised in this here briar-patch."

And that's what Jesus knew. Although his earthly adversaries were being wicked, they were helping him as a double agent get to the cross to fulfill his purpose. But meanwhile the devil, the real enemy was trying to keep Jesus off of the cross. He didn't want Jesus to be crucified. The devil knew if Jesus made it to the cross, game over Jesus wins. See, look what he did, Matthew Chapter 4 it says, "Again, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all of the kingdoms." And said, "Hey, I'll give you all of these if you fall down and worship me." But Jesus said, "Be gone Satan for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve." So, the devil left. When the devil couldn't keep him off the cross, that way he tried to use Peter.

In Matthew 16, Jesus began to tell his disciples, "Hey look you all, they're going to kill me but on the third day I'm going to be raised." And Peter took him aside and said, "Far be it from you Lord, this will never happen." And Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get behind me Satan. You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man." And then look at Pilate. Pilate tried to keep him off the cross and he say, "Look Jesus, I have the power to keep you off the cross." And Jesus said, "You have no power except my dad gave it to you. I am laying my life down."

So, the devil tried so hard to keep Jesus off the cross and he tries that trick with us. He uses our lack of patience with each other and he uses our lack of patience to see God's plan to the end. And he knows if he can keep us distracted by our earthly adversaries, he can keep us distracted from the cross. The battle you think you're fighting, the one you can see is nothing more than a distraction. The real battle is your thought life. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the rulers in the darkness in this world. The devil knows if you go through with God's plan even if it hurts for a moment, you will win.

Travis Greene has a song. It's called, "Just want You." The lyrics say, "Take everything. I don't want it. I don't need it, God. I just want you." It was an anthem to choose to be like Christ. The first 30 days I'm like, "Ahh, take everything Lord. I don't want it. I don't even need it." That was me in my car, in the shower just

singing, "Lord, I don't need it, I just want you." But day 31 I woke up and everything was gone, I was like, "Hold up!" Sent Travis Greene a text. I said, "I love your song until everything was gone." But at one time my life, my family, my car, my church, my ministry, my job, all under attack. The dog I got that I don't want, he was being attacked by fleas all at the same time. I was like, "Lord, but wait." God was like, "Well, what Christ were you singing about?"

And I realized, I was in a posture of surrender but I wasn't sincere about surrender. And I realized we only want the victory but we don't want the battle. I once heard someone ask, "Why in the world did you keep asking for the whole armor of God if you are never going to fight." You can't have Easter Sunday without Good Friday. You can't have a resurrected savior until you have a crucified king. Yes, Jesus won the victory but it was a bloody victory. After denying Jesus three times as Jesus predicted, Peter would do. And after Jesus was resurrected, Peter did the right thing and began spreading the Gospel at all cost. He was no longer allergic to dirty feet. As we get closer to Easter, ask yourself, "Am I pretending to be allergic to feet? Am I pretending like I can't help nobody?"

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I told my pastor last year. I told him and I said, "You know, they keep saying Jesus was hung next to a thief but Jesus was actually a thief." He said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "Because a thief takes something that doesn't belong to him. Those were my sins, those were my transgressions, those were my shortcomings, and Jesus just came and took them without asking me for them."

He said, "Can I use that next Sunday?" I said, "Okay, use it." And when he started using it that Sunday, Jesus was in my ear just laughing and saying, "I left like a thief and I'm coming back like a thief in the night so I need you to be ready when I return." You can keep pretending like you're allergic to feet but don't get caught with your work undone. There is somebody in your life, your little Johnny that God is calling us as we approach Easter, to be of service to, to wash their feet, not physically but spiritually by meeting them at the point of their need.

God bless you and thank you all so much.

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