

Have You Washed Any Feet Lately?

The “image” of public ministry is in the process of being dismantled. Why? Because it is based on forms adopted by man and elevated by him to the point of becoming gospel. The spirit of Christ—the spirit of servanthood—has been lost somewhere in the shuffle and replaced by the spirit of entitlement.

We have become experts at defining how leaders should behave, and we have become obsessed with finding the “elite” who can fix us when everything else fails. Yet underneath the thin veneer of performance, some leaders in our society are functioning with borderline personality disorders, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, and hidden addictions and lusts they have assumed in an attempt to fill the void in their souls.

None of us has to look far in our circle of relationships to recognize that many people we thought were leaders are merely performing behind a mask. We have so highly prized “perfect performance” that we have watched the spirit of competition and comparison come into our churches and seen leaders at every level act more like territorial warlords than followers of Christ.

We have elevated performance and outward appearance in the name of defending the faith, but what we are actually defending is the false image we have substituted for the true spirit of servanthood in Christ. It has been in the pew as well as the pulpit, yet a code of silence has enabled us to hide behind the facade of “super spirituality” and forced us to deny the disintegration that exists both within and outside us.

I wonder if Peter, who was so surprised by the Lord’s

insistence on washing his feet (see John 13:6), would have dared to take off his own cloak and don the servant's towel. Like many leaders today, he probably would have considered such an action "beneath him." After all, he had an image to preserve and a reputation to be maintained.

Yet when Jesus explained His actions, Peter realized that a new day was coming in which religious leaders would no longer be placed on a pedestal but would become the servants of all.

Jesus shattered every preconceived idea of ministry and leadership when He removed His robe, draped a towel around Himself, poured water into a basin and washed His disciples' feet. (see John 13:3-5). They were looking for a king, but He was acting like a slave!

The Leader of the new move of God delegitimized the prevailing false image of power and leadership by taking the towel Himself and getting as low as He could to remove the debris from between the toes of the next generation of servant-leaders. Peter couldn't handle this because he couldn't see himself doing the thing his Teacher was doing. He was too concerned about his image.

Jesus, on the other hand, had no need to play the image game. He knew where He came from, He knew who He was, and He knew where He was going (no borderline personality disorder here).

It was not beneath Him to assume the lowest place in the room. As big as He was, He was never too big for the room. He "took the form" of a servant and delighted to live there because He knew that the Father dwells with the humble.

It's time we checked to see if we have become "too big for the room." We need to have our feet washed from the dust of modernism and allow the Servant of servants to model for us the way into the new millennium. Our personality disorders would be healed if we were willing to take the form of a servant.

All of us today want to see revival. We want to see the river of God flowing in our nation. This has become the emerging prophetic cry of our generation: that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will manifest as a worldwide flow of water covering the earth.

Where is the river of God? Where is the revival and the refreshing? Jesus said, "Where I am, there will My servants be also" (see John 12:26). Wherever there are servants who are leading the way into the future by modeling the life that God is attentive to and honors, there the water will be flowing.

If we can learn a lesson from Peter's mistake and not be so concerned with the honor of our positions and titles, we might discover that right at our feet is the position of honor—the place where the Father restores our sense of wholeness, balance, dignity and identity. Whoever seeks to be the greatest needs to have the capacity to become a servant. May we seek the sign of the "Man with the towel and basin" and follow Him into the new day that is already dawning on the horizon of divine intention!

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