

Maundy Thursday in Holy Week

Simon Peter: John 13:3-8

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 basin 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."

Reflection by Ray Donnelly:

Hello. I am Simon. At least, I used to be Simon. Yeshua gave me a new name, "The Stone" because I am strong. So he said. James and John over there say I am The Stone because I am as strong as a building block and twice as smart. Then they laugh. I don't get the joke but I like being called The Stone.

Why am I in Jerusalem? I follow him everywhere these days. I don't understand exactly why but I know that he fascinates me and I watch everything he does and I listen to every word he says. I simply must follow him. It started a while back when I was mending my nets and getting ready to catch some fish, just like every day. And Yeshua walked by and said "Follow me." I didn't know him then but I was still pulled along by his personality. I kept following then and I am still following and watching now.

I don't always understand what he is doing. He says some confusing things that aren't like what the rabbi says. But just when my mind is spinning, trying to make sense of it all, he goes and heals somebody. Or feeds a bunch of people out of almost nothing. Or sits down with tax collectors and whores...and he eats with them, as equals. My head says all of that is impossible, forbidden. But, my heart says: Follow. So, I do.

And just tonight, he did something strange and I am still trying to make sense of it. We all had a good meal and he suddenly got up and whipped off his robe, grabbed a basin and a jar of water and started to wash everyone's feet--everyone, man, woman and child-- he washed their feet just like a servant. I've never seen any other teacher do that; always, they are the ones who are honored by a servant.

I was at the end of the table, where he was finishing the washing and it looked like he was about to try to wash my feet. I was ashamed to see him kneeling by me with the basin and towel; I should be washing his feet, not the other way around. Naturally, I objected but I think I irritated him and he kind of threatened to send me away, told me that I would have nothing more to do with him unless he washed my feet.

I couldn't imagine anything worse than being pushed away from him. So I told him to wash me all over if that is what it took for me to belong with him. And he kind of laughed and said that washing the feet would be enough and that I should think about why he was doing this foot washing, so that I would understand later. And if I still didn't understand, he would explain it.

Who knows where he will go from here? I don't know that. But I do know that where he goes, I will follow.