

WASHING NASTY FEET

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It will be Easter again in three weeks and I am watching anxiously, trying to determine if it will be warm enough to go barefoot. That was it – the magic date when Mama let us begin to go barefoot again each spring. As everyone knows, Easter is determined by calculating the first Sunday following the first full moon, following the Vernal Equinox and so can vary from March 22, until April 25, and thus can vary greatly in average ground and air temperature. No matter to Mama, it was barefoot day in Middle Tennessee.

Recently, our Sunday school class was studying about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples as is recorded in the 13th chapter of John and we noted that while the other Gospels focused on the Last Supper, John focused on the foot washing. In the exchange Peter, the disciple made it clear that he thought it completely inappropriate for The Master to be washing his feet; however, Jesus let Peter know that if he didn't wash him, Peter would not belong to Jesus. Per in a characteristic "Peteresk" response, said, "Just wash me all over."

Jesus let him know he was basically clean, his feet had just gotten dirty and he needed a little touch-up.

I can remember coming in from a day on the farm having gone barefoot for the day. Often the cows made little surprises for you in the pasture, and we called it "cutting your foot." "Careful, don't cut your foot there." "Oh yuck, I cut my foot on a fresh one."

When you mixed the pasture pies and the barnyard muck, it made for very dirty feet, so when you got home, Mama would say, "Now don't you go to bed with those nasty feet, you wash them" (This was usually coupled with some threats about tying them up in a flour sack if they got the sheets dirty.)

"Ah, Mama do I have to take a bath?"

"No you don't need a bath, you had one Saturday nigh." (and this was only Tuesday, not another one until Wednesday in preparation for prayer meeting.)

Baths themselves were something of a drill. We had a bathroom by that time; one bathroom for five people and there was an order of water usage at our house. Mama would get a bath, and I would use her water for my bath. Great Aunt Ada "Adie" would get a bath and Donnieta would use her water for a bath. Only Daddy, king of the castle, would get to use his own, non-recyclable, water. (This might seem shocking to some folks but many older people reading this will remember trying to get the line up of whose

water you used straight – after all the thought of heating and filling the tub five times was wasteful beyond our comprehension.)

After confirming that you did not have to take a full bath, Mama would carry an aluminum dishpan of heated water and a bar of Lava soap out to the edge of the porch for you to wash your feet. She didn't wash them for me, but she did lay some close supervision on me.

I think that may have been one of the lessons Jesus was conveying to the disciples. He was about to wash them fully, in the blood of the new covenant by His death on the cross, but they would still need touching up from time to time. They would still get their feet nasty and Jesus would be up to that job also. John said in 1 John, "If you walk in the light as He is in the light, you have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from all sin." You only take one full washing, but Jesus by the blood and the water continues to cleanse you if you will only let Him.

The standards of personal hygiene and bathing have changed considerably since those days of green feet from pasture pies, but the standards of spiritual cleanliness remain constant.

Once you have been washed and made clean, you may still find that you get your feet nasty now and then. Aren't you thankful that if we will only let Him, Jesus is untiringly there with the basin ready to make us wholly clean once again?

Happy Easter Sunday, and – He is risen!

*Read more about Robert Rogers Chaffin in the Chaffin files and read more Writer's corner stories at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>