

THE FEET OF GOD
Third in a Series on “The Incarnation and the Body of Christ”
July 24, 2012 –Matthew 28: 16-20
The Church of the Covenant

Why am I preaching on the feet of God? Why am I concluding this three part sermon series on The Incarnation and the Body of Christ by emphasizing the Feet of God in Jesus Christ? I mean, as we all know, there is the THRILL of victory...but the AGONY of De-feets! (Sorry about that!). What is the significance of the fact that we as the Church, the Body of Christ, are to be the feet of Jesus today?

Think about the birth of Jesus. Mary, as any Mother would, would have examined her newborn baby literally from head to toe. Did Jesus at birth have feet that looked like Mary's, or that looked like a miniature version of Joseph's feet, or did Jesus' feet look entirely different from either of His earthly parent's? Did Jesus' feet look like His heavenly Father's feet? In the beautiful solo anthem, *Mary, Did You Know*, is a wonderful set of lyrics written by Mary Carter Young which has the Mother of Jesus, musing and pondering about the significance of this baby she is cradling in her arms. "When you kiss the face of your baby, you kiss the face of God." "This child that you've delivered will soon deliver you." Would Mary not have observed and kissed the feet of her newborn? Would she not have cradled and caressed the infant feet of Jesus, too?

As a man, Jesus' feet would have carried Him about all of Judea over the three years of His earthly ministry. His feet would have been shod with sandals, "*wear sandals and not put on two tunics*", He charged His disciples to take "*nothing for the journey*" (Mark 6: 8, 9), so we may be fairly certain that Jesus had only one pair of sandals as He itinerated across the Holy Land preaching the GOSPEL, preaching the Good News that God had sent Him into the world to proclaim. Scholars estimate that he would have walked at least 700 miles over three years. His feet would have been worn and calloused from all that walking. His feet would have been tired and dusty and dirty. Before Jesus goes to the cross a woman anoints His feet with costly oil and washes His feet with her tears. She is not a good woman; she is a "*woman of the city, a sinner*" as the scripture describes her. But she has responded to the Gospel that Jesus has proclaimed. Her sins are forgiven her. Jesus says to her as He says to us: "*Your sins are forgiven.*" Jesus says to the critical Pharisees who are questioning Him –"*Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.*" (Luke 7: 47) So Jesus has walked all over the Holy Land proclaiming the Gospel of peace. He has proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of God. Some people, the Pharisees, have rejected the Gospel. Others, like this woman, have responded with their tears, their love and their faith. In some places, He has been received. But in other places they did not know the time of their visitation and Jesus advises His disciples to shake the dust from their feet of those towns. (Matthew 10: 14) When we were in seminary we had a little thing we would do when we came back from our field education churches, tired from a long day on a Sunday evening. Someone would ask us, "So how did the day go?" and if nothing *spiritually* happened, smart alecks and young know it all whipper-snappers that we were, we wouldn't say a word we would just tap our shoes on the ground as if to tap the dust from our field ed churches from our feet. But understand that a person, a church or a city accepts or rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and then the disciple of Jesus is to move on to another place is the Gospel message is not received. Jesus Christ died on the cross to pardon and sanctify us and bring us into the presence of a Holy God. Jesus did something for us at Calvary that we can never do for ourselves. The free gift of grace is given by Christ alone. The Gospel comes by the preaching of the Word of God. The Gospel comes through the presence and the power of Jesus. The Gospel has the power to transform a person from the inside out. The Gospel has the spiritual power to take our heart and to change it; to move us from being people "sort of committed" to God to

move us to be people saturated with the love and the presence of God. It is why the Bible elsewhere proclaims –“How beautiful are the FEET of those who preach good news!” (Romans 10: 15; Isaiah 52: 7) Now I don’t know about you, but I can tell you that my feet are not intrinsically beautiful; no, to be honest, they are ugly and stanky (stanky is beyond stinky!). The preacher’s feet are only beautiful as they get the Gospel out to where it needs to be. Jesus’ feet were beautiful because He traveled around the Holy Land preaching the Good News. The Lord’s feet were beautiful because when He preached men and women were transformed –the woman who washed His feet with her tears was made new, had a new start in life, because she responded to the Gospel. **I think “feet” mean that the Good News has “feet”, the Gospel gets out from just being inside the walls of the church and gets out there into the community and world.** The Church stops observing its own navel on the inside of the building and starts taking the message of Christ outside into its community and world. We become the “FEET” of Jesus. We become the incarnate feet of Christ. We become the feet of God. When we do backpack ministry and make sure no child goes hungry in Washington we are the FEET of God taking the Good News to our community. When we host the temporarily homeless in our church through Family Promise our feet become the feet of Jesus because we are taking Good News to people who need it. When we go on a mission trip to the Menaul School this fall or to Haiti this coming February we become the feet of God, taking Good News with us. When we pack a Christmas Shoebox through Operation Christmas Child and it is sent to the other side of the globe and some little child opens it, and is told the message of the Gospel, we become the incarnate feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our text, The Great Commission, from Matthew 28: 19 says simply, “Go...” It doesn’t say, “stay”; it doesn’t say talk about a bunch of stuff; it doesn’t say “sit in our comfortable pew”; it doesn’t say be sitting around the premises; it says stand on the promises; it says get out there and do something for the Lord; take the Gospel with you; preach the Word through your words and through your deeds; it says “**Go –Go! – GO!!!!**” How beautiful are the feet of those who GO, of those who preach the good news, of those who bring the living presence of the Lord Jesus Christ to a world in need. We ARE the Feet of God; we are the incarnate presence of Jesus Christ for our world...

Now back to the feet of Jesus and with this I conclude. Now consider another scene; this one is Calvary; this one has a cross at its center. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is there, standing at the foot of the cross. The little tiny feet she caressed when Jesus was an infant, are now nailed to a cruel cross by a nine inch nail. Standing at the foot of the cross of her son, His feet are the first thing Mary sees. Mary, did you know that the feet you caressed when Jesus was newborn, one day would be cruelly nailed to a cross that we might be saved and that the Good News might not ever die but be proclaimed forever? Mary, did you know? A nail has now pierced the feet of Christ; a nail has now tried to stop the spread of the Gospel; it has tried to nail in place the feet of the Man from Galilee; so that the Good News might remain nailed in place and never go forth, and not be spread. The beautiful feet of Jesus are nailed to a cross. **And sometimes, Christian, when we hide away in our pretty churches our beautiful feet are nailed in place as well.** But they could not keep Him there. Nor could they keep Him in the grave. They could not stop the spread of the Gospel message. They could not nail Him permanently to the tree of death and despair. The Gospel has POWER. At the end of this service certain pre-selected people will come forward and bring a shoe box forward and lay it at the foot of the cross of Jesus to kick off this year’s Operation Christmas Child. May it be a symbol of our desire for our feet to go throughout this community and world in order to spread the Good News of the Gospel. May these shoeboxes represent for us going into all the world and making disciples of all nations. Are Jesus’ feet permanently nailed to the cross? Or will we be His feet? Will we “GO” into our community and world and spread His gospel? Amen.

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*

