

his unrestrained love for them. To flood their lives that they might know Jesus' amazing grace and so also begin to live a life of faith expressing itself through love.

Jesus never reveals a person's flaws to me that I might condemn them, but as an opportunity to unleash a torrent of his love into their lives, changing them from crabby into joy-filled people.

The disciples only saw dirty feet they didn't want to touch. After all what could be gained from washing feet – nothing. Jesus saw an opportunity to love, so he showed them the full extent of his love, humbly kneeling before them washing their filthy, stinking feet with unrestrained love.

Let us pray:  
Jesus we thank you for your unrestrained love which has washed us clean. Thank you for not giving us what we deserve but what you desire – love us with your entire being. We thank, praise and adore you because of your amazing grace. Thank you for not coming to condemn but to save. Forgive me for the times I've condemned others this week. Show me how I might love instead. Jesus fill me with the Holy Spirit that my life might be, faith in you expressing itself in love. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

9 April 2009

## CHRIST'S COMMAND TO LOVE.

Maundy Thursday



How would you answer this question: 'What matters most?' In the early church there was a huge debate, it threatened to divide the church, it was massive – did a male have to be circumcised or not, to be a Christian. This was huge, tempers flared; people were prepared to stake their lives on this issue.

'What matters most?' From Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." What matters most? Our faith in Christ Jesus expressing itself through love.

That's certainly the pattern of Jesus' life; his faith in the Father expressing itself in

love. He lived that out on the night he and his disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover. No-one was keen to wash the feet of the other, they weren't looking to express faith through love, they were keen to get the best seats.

Peter was certainly concerned about having the right image, so much so that he tries to stop Jesus from washing his feet. This wasn't the right image for their all conquering saviour. This isn't the hero Peter had in mind; the great warrior liberating his people, defeating the might of the Roman Empire, ruling in majesty and glory. That's more like how things should be. What mattered was to have the right image, but Jesus serves, like a

slave, and washes their feet.

Do we let things that are in the end trivial swamp our loving expression of faith?

If I was to be honest I'd have to say yes. If as a church we put as much effort and energy into expressing love as we have in arguing what we feel is right I think many more people would have felt loved rather than condemned.

Did Jesus come to condemn the world? What's John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him." God's goal in Jesus is never condemnation.

When I read our 'Red' book on the Lutheran Church's doctrinal

statements I always like to see the section on the evils of dancing. How many people felt condemned because they danced? We may laugh at how silly we were, but I often think how good it is to have those statements their, as a prod to stop condemning the people who wrote and enforced those statements and to ask God to open my eyes to where I might be doing the very same thing, today.

What matters most isn't condemning people, but setting them free in Christ Jesus that their lives might become an expression of his eternal love, his love that never gives up, his love that knows no bounds but is prepared to sacrifice everything in the pursuit of loving.

Who am I tempted to condemn, after all they do have the wrong end of the stick. They don't work as hard as I'd like.

They don't pray as much as I'd like. They grumble and complain about others, but never look at themselves and their harsh ways. Isn't it easy to get into a condemning mood. Their hair's too long, not it's too short, it's just all wrong. They aren't really committed to their faith, cause if

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### What matters most?

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they were fair-dinkum they'd be as earnest at me. When will they ever learn. Isn't it so easy to flow into the condemning mood. But Jesus didn't come to condemn, but to save.

I'm sure Jesus doesn't reveal people's flaws to us so that we can condemn them. Just imagine if Jesus had taken that mindset; spot their flaws then flaw them. I'd be down for the count.

Thankfully Jesus spots my flaws and ministers to them. Jesus reveals my flaws and then fills them with his loving presence, that I might be healed, that I might be renewed from the heart through to my fingertips. Jesus goal is to love me, warts and all.

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I'm sure at times that's not the easiest thing in the world to do. Condemning is the easiest thing. Using my might to prove

I'm right, now that's the easiest thing to do. Jesus has chosen to do the best. What matters most? He loves us with his entire being, sacrificing everything to ensure we're loved of God.

Of course one special way Jesus ministers into my flaws, filling them with his presence is through the bread and wine of communion. There I don't receive the condemnation I deserve but the love

Jesus desires to give. There Jesus ministers into my flaws, filling me with his loving presence that I might be changed from my heart right through to my fingertips living out expressions of his love in all I say and do.

Tonight as you come forward for communion, ask God to heal your condemning nature and replace it with his loving nature, which never gives people what they deserve, but rather the undeserved love of Christ. Who are the people you've put down this week? Who are the people you've labelled as not good enough damaging their reputation? What are the trivial things you've held fast no matter who got in the road? Where have you been grumpy and irritable destroying people with your abrasive actions? Where have you gossiped, speaking half truths, speaking

knowing it could only throw a bad light on people or a situation?

Tonight as we come forward for communion thankfully we come into the presence of one who's not the slightest bit interested in condemning. We can bear our souls to Jesus, openly, honestly, and

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### Faith Expressing itself in LOVE

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be filled with the Holy Spirit that we might have the power to be true to who we are in Christ Jesus, his loved precious children, who he's proud of.

And loved people are able to love, never for what's in it for them, but simply because of who they are.

After washing his disciples feet Jesus said; "I have set you an example that you should do as I have

done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than their master... Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (John 13:15-17)

This is not some conditional phrase that destroys the free gift of God, but a reminder that we need to put this gift into practice. The blessing flows when the tap is opened. When I open a tap in my house I don't created water, I let the potential that is there flow.

We have a never ending supply of God's love at our fingertips, that's a certainty in Jesus. But Jesus doesn't want us to build wall locking up his love, but open values that let his love flood unrestrained into people's lives.

So as Jesus reveals people's flaws, their needs to you, he's call you to flood them with