

# Closer; Meditation for Passover by Sue Paterson

(Thoughts taken from 'Discovering Prayer').

Sharing a meal was a sign of covenant, friendship. We are looking today at God's touch on our lives as He draws us closer. By removing His sandals and washing their feet, Jesus was showing them He was granting them a new inheritance. Sandals were often used in covenants of inheritance in Hebrew culture. Every defilement is removed, and they place the soles of the feet on the new inheritance; Moses was symbolically given a new inheritance; the holiness and authority of God.

John 13: 1-11 Passion Bible

Jesus knew that the night of Passover would be His last night on earth before leaving this world to return to His Father's side. All throughout this time with His disciples, Jesus had demonstrated a deep and tender love for them. Now He longed to show them the full measure of His love. Before their evening meal had begun, the accuser had already planted betrayal into the heart of Judas Iscariot.

*Now Jesus was fully aware that the Father had placed all things under His control, for He had come from God and was about to go back to be with Him. So He got up from the meal, and took off His outer robe and took a towel and wrapped it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' dirty feet and dried them with a towel.*

*But when Jesus got to Simon Peter, he objected and said 'I can't let You wash my feet; You my Lord!' Jesus replied, 'you don't understand yet the meaning of what I'm doing, but soon it will be clear to you'. Peter looked at Jesus and said, 'You'll never wash my feet; Never!'*

*'But Peter, if I don't wash your feet,' responded Jesus, 'then you will not be able to share life with me'.*

*So, Peter said, 'Lord, in that case don't wash just my feet, wash my hands and my head also!'*

*Jesus said to him 'you are already clean. You've been washed completely, and you just need your feet to be cleaned; but that can't be said about all of you.' For Jesus knew which one was about to betray Him and that's why he told them that not all of them were clean'*

## **Lets imagine the scene and ourselves in it;**

Jesus is with His friends before the festival of Passover. A time chosen by God, not by chance, it was a time when the Jewish people gathered in Jerusalem.

During the Passover, a lamb was sacrificed; a lamb to remember the time that God rescued his people from Egyptian slavery. Lambs were sacrificed and their blood daubed on household doors so that the Angel of death would Passover without harming those inside.

This was the festival that Jesus and His friends would be familiar with and were gathered for this traditional meal.

**Imagine yourselves at the scene, perhaps as one of the disciples. Imagine how you are sitting, what you are wearing and where you are in the room in relation to Jesus.**

**Imagine the smell of the food, the sounds outside in the city. You've just shared a meal with Jesus and the others, away from the crowds, a place to be together at the time of the festival. Imagine the meal you've just eaten, the unleavened bread commemorating the old covenant of God with His people.**

(From the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, we know that the bread and wine were shared as a new covenant with God; a symbol of Christ's body and blood, the ultimate sacrifice).

**This is at least part of the meal that you have just eaten. How was the mood of the meal? What did people say to each other?**

(From the gospels we know that Jesus knew that the hour had come for Him to depart and return to the Father).

**How do you react to the thought that Jesus knew He was going to depart? How do you feel? We hear that having loved those in the world He loved them to the end.**

**As you sit at the table with Jesus, having finished your meal, are you aware of His love for you? What impact does this have on you?**

And now the story continues. **Judas takes the bread that Jesus gives him, then Jesus gets up from the table. Picture what He might look like and see Him take off His outer robe and ties a towel round His waist. What's He going to do?**

**You watch as He pours water into a basin and begins to wash the disciple's feet and to wipe them with the towel. Imagine the disciple's amazement. Then Jesus just kneels at your feet and gently washes them. Feel the cool of the water on your feet, feel your thoughts, your emotions. He dries your feet with the towel.**

**Now Jesus comes to Simon Peter who says ' Lord are You going to wash my feet?' Hear Jesus replying ' You do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand'.**

**Peter says ' You will never wash my feet!' Listen as Jesus says 'Unless I wash you, you have no share in me'.**

**Then Simon Peter says ' Lord not my feet only , but also my hands and head!' Hear Jesus replying ' One who has bathed does not need to wash except the feet, but is entirely clean and you are clean, but not all of you'.**

**Lets stay with Jesus in this moment.....**

**How do you react to having your feet washed by Jesus?**

**What influence does this have on you now?**

**What do you think of these events and your part in them?**

**Do you have questions for Him?**

**If you do, you can speak to Him now.....**

**Begin to reflect on what you have just heard.**

**How do you react to Simon Peter's outburst, wondering why his Lord should wash his feet?**

**About Jesus' words that you are clean?**

**What do you make of Jesus, who is God, washing your feet?**

**What is God saying to you through this?**