
My Sermon from Easter Sunday April 4, 2021 Sunday of The Resurrection ~

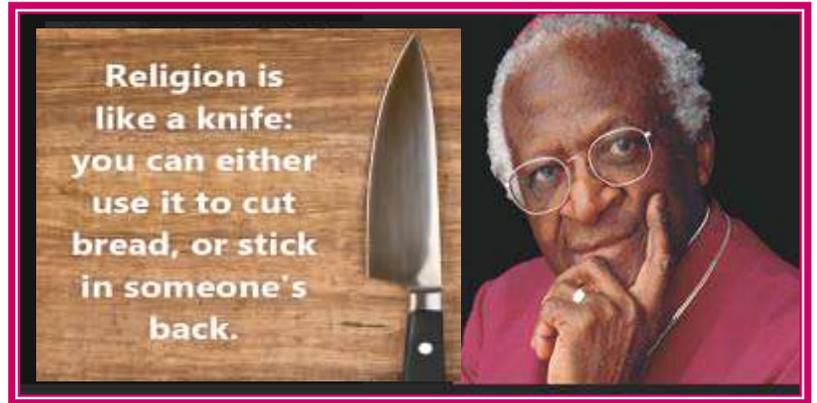
"Beautiful Feet"

I speak to you in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

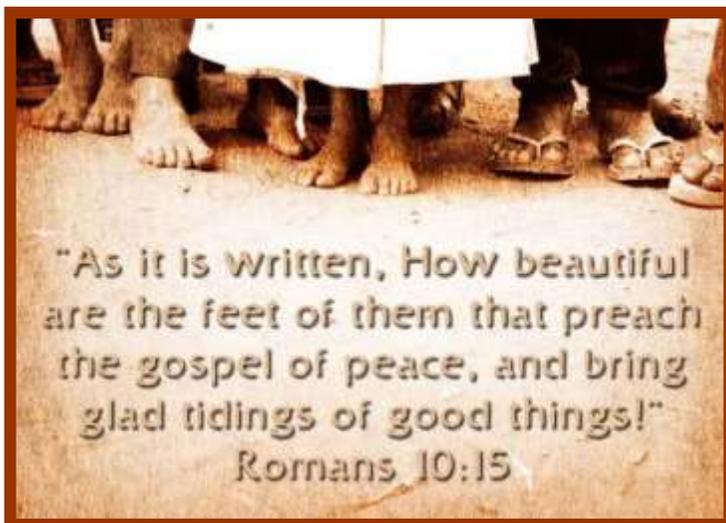
There is a statement made by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa that I wish to share with you this Easter morning:

Religion is like a knife: you can either use it to cut bread, or stick in someone's back.

May we always have the grace to use the religious knife to share, to be kind, to be compassionate and never use it to be judgmental for what the other person believes or to be mean or cruel or to use our knife to draw the line in the sand. On this Easter Sunday, let us each resolve to use our religious knives to make peace.



In his letter to Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul writes this:



"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10:15

Paul is quoting from the prophet Isaiah who hundreds of years earlier referred to feet as beautiful:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation."

Isaiah 52:7

Isaiah was writing about the feet of messengers whose feet would have been dirty and aching and tired after they had travelled hundreds of kilometres to announce to the Hebrews that the Babylonian exile was over. These messengers ran marathons to bring news to the people. In this case, they would have been thrilled to be messengers of good news, of salvation. Change was happening. Good times were ahead. Would you and I have called their feet beautiful?

St. Paul was writing about the gospel, the good news that comes from proclaiming the reality of the resurrection, of how death was defeated, and that Christ rose from the dead to redeem us and to bring us our salvation. **All feet are 'beautiful' if they are bringing good news.**

This adjective is not one that we normally associate with our feet, is it? Our feet bear the load of our bodies as we walk or as we run. Thank God for your feet that have taken you many places.

Please take a good look at your own feet today. How would you describe them? Your feet might be bony or they might be plump. Your feet might have callouses, and bunions and ingrown toenails.

Your feet might get hot and sweaty and smelly in the summer months. I have never before called my feet 'beautiful.' Some of you, through injuries or illness, may not be able to walk but know that your feet are still beautiful. In the eyes of God, each and every one of you has beautiful feet.

I have treasured the feet of our 4 children when they were newborns. How I would hold that little foot in my hand and imagine the journeys that that little foot would take, all the adventures, all the joy. The little foot would fit snugly in my hand and the long newborn toes would stretch out with possibilities of what life would hold.

I would be so excited when our children learned how to walk. Those first steps are never to be forgotten. There isn't a parent here who doesn't remember at what age their child learned to walk. And those little feet that will take many steps remind us of the power of the risen Christ to bring us, in the words of St. Paul, "***Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.***" Romans 6:4

When I was as little girl, I would always have new shoes, a new dress and a new hat for Easter. Here is a photo of cantor and parishioner Pat Cupp as a little girl, all dressed up and ready for Easter.

I didn't understand until I was much older as to the significance of the new clothing representing our **newness of life** through the resurrection.

I prepared a slide show of photos of my family's feet and of our 4 wardens feet. They are all good sports and sent these pictures to me. Look at these beautiful feet . . .

(Note To Readers: I had our videographer Deirdre show several slides of the people's beautiful feet here!)

I hope you enjoyed looking at these photos of beautiful feet. In the spirit of the prophet Isaiah and the apostle Paul, please look down at your own feet and call them beautiful. They have walked many km and born the load for you.



Today on Easter Sunday 2021 we are celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. Jesus had taken his last step when he carried his own cross to Golgotha. On the 3rd day, Christ rose from the dead. In Paul's letter to Christians in Rome, Paul writes that "***Christ, being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.***" Romans 6:9

Look at all the steps taken by feet on that Sunday of the Resurrection. It happened very early in the morning. It wasn't even sunrise. John's gospel account tells us that it was still dark. Mary Magdalene walked to the tomb from where she was staying in Jerusalem. According to the other gospel accounts, Mary was with other women and they were carrying spices to anoint the body of their beloved Jesus. When they got here, they saw that the stone covering the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away. Without looking further, in fear and in desperation, Mary runs to the upper room where Peter and John are hiding with the other disciples. John's account is clear that she is running. She is the messenger with news. Her feet carry her quickly so she can speak with Peter and John. What happens next? They all run as fast as they can back to the tomb. What happens next? Why has the stone rolled away? There was a guard there all night so how could this have happened? They run with intensity. When they get to the tomb, Peter has the courage to go inside. He sees

linen wrappings all rolled up but no Jesus. Then John walks in and sees the empty tomb for himself. They now finally understand and believe that Jesus is risen. Alleluia! Jesus had told them this would happen but they did not understand or believe. Then, they walk back to the upper room to announce the good news. Their feet are indeed beautiful!

Mary stays on her feet outside of the empty tomb weeping. She turns and sees Jesus standing on his feet and she does not know that it is Jesus. She thinks Jesus is the gardener and she asks him where they have laid the body of her beloved friend and teacher. Jesus tells her not to hang on to him, not to hang on to the past, but to return on her feet and announce the news, the gospel of our salvation. Mary uses her beautiful feet to announce the good news to the disciples: **“I have seen the Lord!”**

On that Easter day, the risen Christ himself will appear to the disciples in the upper room and then a week later he will appear again. On that first visit, the risen Christ will show his friends his hands and his feet. On the next visit, Thomas will need to touch the wounds of the risen Christ ~ his hands and his side. There is no mention in the Bible of Thomas asking to touch Jesus’ wounds in his feet. I would have loved to have been there and bent down and touched the feet of the risen Christ, the feet that worked so very hard bringing the kingdom of God to thousands, the feet that showed the wounds where Jesus was nailed to the cross, and to have been able to look up into the face of Christ and say to my Saviour, my Lord ~ *“Thank you. You have beautiful feet.”*

On that first Easter day, feet are prominent. Two of Jesus’ followers will walk home to Emmaus. On the way the risen Christ will walk beside them and share with them the beautiful news that he is alive. That night at supper in Emmaus at their home with Jesus, these two friends of Jesus, realize that they had been walking with the risen Christ. What is their immediate reaction? Their dusty and travel-weary feet become beautiful. Their feet become messenger feet as they walk back, with burning hearts, to Jerusalem to announce the good news that the Lord is risen indeed!

What is my longing on this Easter Sunday 2021? I long to have the beautiful feet of the messenger, who announces good news, who announces peace, who announces salvation.



May each of us this day announce to our family, our neighbours, our friends, our colleagues that we walk in newness of life and that we share in the resurrection of Jesus. Let us announce good news.

I dream of a day when our feet will carry us back to community worship where we can share the good news together, when we can walk forward to God’s holy table and receive the eucharist, when we can use our feet to walk towards each other in love and share the peace.

And yes, Archbishop Tutu, may we always use our Christian beliefs to cut bread.

Finally, I wish to say to each of you who are watching this service all around the world ~

“You have beautiful feet! Alleluia!”

Archdeacon Deborah+

