

THE BRONZE BASIN

“They washed whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses”

—EXODUS 40:32

Between the altar and the entrance to the tabernacle was a bronze basin which held water for washing. This was exclusively for the use of the priests who washed their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle and handling the utensils at the altar for burnt offerings.

The requirement for entering the presence of God and for handling the things of God is cleanliness. A person is justified when one comes to the cross in repentance and faith. That never needs repetition. It is a completed act and has become one's standing before God. When we come in repentance and faith, God imputes His righteousness to us and “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). However, there is an ongoing need for cleansing.

This is best illustrated in the Upper Room when Jesus took a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet. “You shall never wash my feet,” Peter said. When Jesus insisted, Peter swung to the other extreme. “Then Lord... not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” Jesus then said, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean” (John 13:9-10). The basin Jesus used would seem to relate to the basin in the court of the tabernacle. The Cross of Christ is our bath! It is there we are cleansed and justified, but we still sin. We still get our hands and feet dirty.

We live in an ongoing battle of the Spirit against the flesh and we fall and we sin. We do not need the bath of justification again, but we do need the basin of cleansing again and again. John writes, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). As the Levites washed their hands and feet at the bronze basin before entering the tabernacle, so we need constantly to come before God for forgiveness and cleansing.

It is interesting to note that in Exodus 38:8 we are told the materials used to make the bronze basin and its bronze stand were from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. The utensils originally manufactured for the purpose of turning attention on themselves were instead converted to an instrument for turning the attention to God. If we become introspective about our spiritual lives, we are almost certain to get frustrated and discouraged, but turn any mirror on Christ, and in keeping our focus on Him, we will find our true purpose and significance.

PRAYER: Lord, may I never take for granted the fact that I stand justified before You. Keep me mindful to come to You for forgiveness and cleansing. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I continue to bring my sin before God in repentance?