



*“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...Above all, clothe yourselves with love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” --Colossians 3: 12 &14*

It’s the time of year again in which my family is excited about getting Easter dresses, shoes, nail polish. I remember as a little girl being excited to get dressed up in pastels – sometimes even with a fancy hat! Then, when I had little girls, I got to do it all over again. When they were little, I sometimes put them in matching dresses or dresses that all coordinated with one another. They outgrew a willingness to go along with my plans, but I live in hope that one day we can do something like that again.

For me growing up, and in turn my own kids, we have always participated in “the three days.” Maundy Thursday was my kids favorite service, because we did foot washing. Sometimes, at our Episcopal Church, the service would run for 2 hours in order to get everyone washed up, but people would come and bring their young children (who definitely love playing in water!). We attended a Good Friday service specifically designed for children and, some years we even went to the Easter Vigil, which also goes for hours. It is a popular day for baptisms.

We were completely immersed in the stories of Jesus’ last supper, crucifixion, and the redemption that God had planned. This was work we did as a family to clothe ourselves in the things listed by Paul in Colossians. Throughout those three days, year after year, we concentrated on the things that would develop:

*Compassion* – Almost all the disciples betrayed/abandoned Jesus during this time.

*Kindness* – The Savior of the world chose to wash the feet of the disciples.

*Humility* – God shows so much more love for humanity than we deserve.

*Meekness* – This is a time to engage more fully in community and let go (a bit) of ourselves.

*Patience* – Like the disciples long ago, we have to wait, each year between Friday and Sunday to experience the resurrection.

*Above all, love*, which binds us all together in perfect harmony – every year this is the hardest part. Holy Week is an intense time of preparation. We are simultaneously doing spiritual work and practical tasks around preparing for a feast. Finding the balance is tricky, but I know I’m giving too much weight to something or other, when I start snapping at the people I love – when my communication becomes more angry than loving.

This year, as you prepare for Easter, keep in mind that the fancy clothes, the chocolate, and the bunnies are just meant to be fun. Don’t let the preparations distract from the beauty of the season. Take time to really think about what resurrection means. Unlike my hopes that all three of my daughters will wear matching dresses, my hope in Jesus is never frustrated. He will always resurrect on that first Easter morning.