* **Apostles Creed**
* **Series Slide**
* The first edition of “Frankenstein” was published in 1818.
* The author, Mary Shelley, was 18 years old when she wrote it.
* Her friend and fellow writer, Lord Byron invited her into a contest to see who could write the scariest ghost story.
* Mary Shelley won. And more than 200 years later, “Frankenstein” is a household name.
* It continues to be one of the most replicated, spoofed, and re-told stories in Western history.
* Because of the ever-present parodies and re-tellings, some of Shelley’s original intent and themes have been lost over the years.
* So, I’m going to try to get us back to the source today. What was really so scary about Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein”? What about it resonated so deeply with the human spirit that it has endured for so long?
* Here’s the synopsis.
* As a child, Dr. Victor Frankenstein was taught and encouraged to experiment with chemistry. He is obsessed from a very early age with trying to recreate natural phenomena. So, after his mother dies of Scarlet Fever, Victor goes off to University to further study chemistry and copes with his un-resolved grief by burying himself in his experiments. He develops this never-before-seen ability to give life to non-living things with the use of electricity.
* He eventually makes this human like creature, which he planned very intricately to be a strikingly beautiful person with all the right features, but when it comes to life, Dr. Frankenstein sees an 8-foot tall creature that absolutely disgusts him.
* **“How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! -- Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.”- Dr. Victor Frankenstein**
* While Dr. Frankenstein is repulsed by his creation, the creature longs for a connection to his creator.
* But Dr. Frankenstein runs and hides in mountains, stricken by guilt for this hideous thing he’s brought to life.
* **Back to Series Slide**
* The creature tracks down the doctor and begs him to listen to his story.
* How does the creature know how to talk, you ask? Well, while living alone in the wilderness, he came upon a family’s home. He watched them for months from the forest and would do kind things for them like gather firewood. He learned to speak by listening to their conversation while hiding in the shadows. He felt like he knew them, but when he revealed himself to them finally tried to connect with them…they all ran in fear at his gruesome appearance.
* This rejection devastated the creature yet again, so he tracked down Victor Frankenstein to demand that he create a female companion for him.
* When the Dr. refuses, the creature threatens to kill his friends and family.
* So the Dr. goes off to a remote island to begin work, but doesn’t want to make the Bride of Frankenstein for fear that they will breed and make a whole race of violent monsters.
* In retaliation, the creature kills Dr. Frankensteins’ best friend and promises that he will show up to the Drs’ wedding to murder his bride as well. And the creature makes good on his promise. On their wedding day, he strangles the new Mrs. Frankenstein. From that point, the revenge is on- and Dr Frankenstein chases the creature all the way to North Pole, where they end up with the elves that wanted to be dentists on the island of the misfits.
* No…just kidding. He does chase the creature all the way to the North Pole trying to enact his revenge, but dies in the Polar Tundra. In the final scene of the book, the Creature is found weeping over his creator’s body. Victor Frankenstein’s death has brought the creature no peace, and his murderous crime spree has left him completely alone. The creature drifts away on an ice raft into the darkness- never to be seen again.
* It's a tragedy.
* And here’s why it has resonated so deeply with us for so long.
* Because human creatures want to be connected- loved and affirmed- by a creator. And we long to understand WHY our creator made us. We want purpose and love from the one who is responsible for our life.
* Yet we will feel like God is Dr. Frankenstein.
* Often when painful things happen in our lives, we feel God is pushing away from us…doesn’t care about us…like he’s disgusted or distancing himself from us. At those times, life feels chaotic, too. Like nothing we do has a point or is really able to accomplish anything meaningful.
* Because deep down, we want our creator to come close to us…not to flee us.
* We want him to tell us who we are…and what we’re supposed to be doing.
* **Title Slide “Frankenstein’s Monster: How the Creator Gives Love and Purpose to His Creatures”- John 13**
* The story of God and humanity in the Bible is the opposite of a Frankenstein story. It's a comedy, not a tragedy.
* Its a story of a creator who makes humanity beautiful, yet it's the humans that turn their backs, disgusted at God.
* Yet, instead of revenge…instead of anger and hatred…God responds to humans…well…with everything and more that the Creature wanted from Dr. Frankenstein.
* Love and purpose.
* **John 13**
* **Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**
* **2 Now when it was time for supper, the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, to betray him. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his hands, that he had come from God, and that he was going back to God. 4 So he got up from supper, laid aside his outer clothing, took a towel, and tied it around himself. 5 Next, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel tied around him.**
* **6 He came to Simon Peter, who asked him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet? ”**
* **7 Jesus answered him, “What I’m doing you don’t realize now, but afterward you will understand.”**
* **8 “You will never wash my feet,” Peter said.**
* **Jesus replied,“If I don’t wash you, you have no part with me.”**
* **9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”**
* **10 “One who has bathed,” Jesus told him,“doesn’t need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you.” 11 For he knew who would betray him. This is why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”**
* **12 When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer clothing, he reclined again and said to them,“Do you know what I have done for you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord ​— ​and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. 14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.**
* **16 “Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.**
* **18 “I’m not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats my bread has raised his heel against me. 19 I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am he. 20 Truly I tell you, whoever receives anyone I send receives me, and the one who receives me receives him who sent me.”**
* **21 When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in his spirit and testified, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”**
* **22 The disciples started looking at one another ​— ​uncertain which one he was speaking about. 23 One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining close beside Jesus. 24 Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was he was talking about. 25 So he leaned back against Jesus and asked him, “Lord, who is it? ”**
* **26 Jesus replied, “He’s the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.” When he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son. 27 After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him. So Jesus told him,“What you’re doing, do quickly.”**
* **28 None of those reclining at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Since Judas kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival,” or that he should give something to the poor. 30 After receiving the piece of bread, he immediately left. And it was night.**
* **31 When he had left, Jesus said,“Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so now I tell you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’**
* **34 “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”**
* **36 “Lord,” Simon Peter said to him, “where are you going? ”**
* **Jesus answered,“Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.”**
* **37 “Lord,” Peter asked, “why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”**
* **38 Jesus replied, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly I tell you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.**
* **Transition:** This act of foot-washing serves 3 purposes in this story. And all 3 paint a beautiful picture of a creator that deeply loves his creation…in spite of the way we have rejected him. My prayer for you today is that as you hear about God’s love for you…that you, the creature, would turn toward your creator…and receive the love that you have been longing for. Here’s some good news…
* **1) Jesus loves you…no strings attached.**
  + Dr. Frankenstein had this picture in his head of the creature he wanted. A beautiful ideal human-oid.
  + Additionally, Dr. Frankenstein created out of a sense of grief and guilt. He created because he had something missing in his life.
  + God on the other hand- created out of an overflow of love. This world, and the humans that populate it, the Bible tells us were created from an overflow of a God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A God who was not lonely, or needy, but who simply wanted to share his love.
  + And…when he created…he said “It was good.” It was- in fact- very good. Unlike Dr. Frankenstein’s creature, humans were created in the image of their creator, beautiful and filled with purpose to love God, love one another, and keep that overflowing pattern of cultivating and creating extending well out of a perfect garden and into the world.
  + Be fruitful and multiply.
  + Yet, by the time we get to John 13, the story has taken a major turn.
  + Humans, over the course of thousands and thousands of years ran from God. Rejected God. Re-defined their purpose. Re-made God in their own image. Made their own moral code. Because God disgusted them.
  + Gods response. Is Jesus. He didn’t run from humanity…he became ONE of humanity. He didn’t run and hide…he chased us…not for revenge…but to love us.
  + And what happens here is a brilliant picture of that.
  + I want you to notice 2 things here.
  + **V1**
  + John’s primary point in writing about this foot-washing is to say, “Jesus loved his disciples all the way to the end.”
  + And that is no doubt what this is.
  + Chapter 12-13 is the beginning of the end for Jesus.
  + While, yes there are 8 more chapters in John’s gospel, those 8 chapters are only going to cover about 4 days.
  + Jesus is about to die. And he knows it.
  + And what’s he doing?
  + Humiliating himself…descending into the nastiness of 1st century foot-washing.
  + **V 4-5**
  + He takes his clothes off- which is its own brand of humiliation.
  + gets down to a towel, and starts to wash their feet.
  + I told you last week when Mary washed Jesus’ feet, that this is not only a disgusting job because of the kinds of animal excrement a first century traveler would have been walking through with their exposed toes…but it was socially considered the job of only the lowest servant.
  + Even today, a man on death row on the night before he dies is in some ways treated like a King. He gets to choose whatever he wants to eat for a last meal.
  + Yet here is Jesus, the perfect Creator of the world, humiliating himself in an act of service…simply because he loves these men.
  + Not only that, he knows and makes plain that 2 of these men are going to betray and deny their relationship with him.
  + **V 21**
  + One is Judas- who will shortly be on his way to the Scribes and Pharisees to tell them where they can find and arrest Jesus. Judas knows that he is about to betray Jesus.
  + **V 37-38**
  + The other is Simon Peter…who seems absolutely clueless that he is about to deny Jesus.
  + Yet, Jesus knows.
* **Back to 1)**
  + Here’s something else about this foot-washing.
  + The disciples weren’t seated at a table like DaVinici’s portrait of the last supper. They would have been leaning in on their elbows with their feet pointed to the outside of this intimate, face to face circle. So Jesus would have had to withdraw himself from this circle of friendship, and put himself outside, alienated from the conversation at the table.
  + Jesus removes himself from the circle that would have best served his personal need. I mean, if it was me, knowing that I was about to be brutally killed, I would have kept my head leaned into the circle, cried my eyes out and said, “Guys, help me figure a way out of this”
  + I would have at least said “OK, everybody say one nice thing about me to encourage me because I’m really scared about what’s about to happen!”
  + But he gives up what would be helpful to him, so that he can serve his followers. Particularly, one’s that he knows are going to betray him.
  + And he doesn’t just serve them by saying, “Peter, I want to encourage you. I have come up with a fun acrostic for your name. P is for Perseverance, E is for Entreprenurial, T is for Trustworthy.”
  + He absolutely humiliates himself. That’s how he “loves them to the end”
  + He puts aside everything that would be helpful to him and serves them in a way that helps them understand his love.
  + This is extraordinary love. This is why the Story of the God of the Bible is a comedy…not a tragedy. Because when God should have been disgusted with these men…when he should have recoiled at their hypocrisy and nastiness…when he should have demanded that they wash his feet…
  + …he descending into everything that was gross about them…on their feet, and in their hearts…and he served them. He loved them to the end. No strings attached.
  + He didn’t love them because they were beautiful.
  + He didn’t love them because they were nice to him.
  + He didn’t love them because they bargained with him and promised to do better next time.
  + While they were at the disgusting low point of hypocrisy and betrayal…he loved them ANYWAY.
  + THIS. IS. GOOD. NEWS.
  + What excuse have you found that God should not love you?
  + What God have you created in your own image that is primarily disgusted with you?
  + Though we have become hideous creatures…GOD IS NOT VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN.
  + He is Jesus Christ…washing our feet…loving us to the end.
  + Before you can lift a finger…covered in all the filth of your sin…GOD LOVES YOU ….NO STRINGS ATTACHED.
* **Transition:** We long for the love of our creator- and we have it. We also want purpose from our creator- and he has given it to us.
* **2) God created you to love like he loves- by humbly serving people that aren’t like you…and don’t deserve it.** 
  + When Frankenstein’s creature was rejected by his creator… he retreated to the woods and began to watch a family interact.
  + He longed to be a part of a family like that…so he began to serve them in small ways…like gathering firewood and leaving it for them outside their door.
  + But they all eventually ran from him too.
  + That’s why he went back to Victor Frankenstein to demand a Bride that was like him. He knew, if he could get someone who was like him…that he maybe…could finally experience the love he had observed in that family.
  + Of course, to do this…he had to murder and threaten. Hatred and anger became the means to get love and acceptance for the creature.
  + That’s not far from the way we often think about the way to find love and acceptance.
  + We think the best way to find a friend is to find someone who is like us. Often, that has to do with surface level commonalities…like things we enjoy doing on the weekends or favorite sports teams or senses of humor.
  + But, like the creature, sometimes we just love to attach ourselves to people who have been hurt like we have been hurt. So we can commiserate together…and slander our enemies.
  + But Jesus calls his disciples to something completely different.
  + **V13-15**
  + After washing their feet, he comes back into the circle of the disciples and he says, “If you call me your master and your teacher…then you will do exactly as I have done to one another.”
  + Think about who the disciples are. On Jesus’ team, there are people who are political rivals. Simon the Zealot was anitfa. And Matthew the Tax Collector wore a MAGA hat to the last supper.
  + That’s pretty much the equivalent.
  + One guy who was sold out to the Roman government, another guy who’s political life purpose was to kill people who sold out to the Romans.
  + And Jesus says, “Humilate yourself to love people that arent’ like you and that you don’t believe deserve your love.”
  + This is a nice, quaint calling. It is radical. And uncomfortable. And everything that America’s current political landscape is not.
  + Christians that slander one another because of political affiliations have no understanding of the Christ they claim is their lord and teacher.
  + **V 16-17**
  + But our problem is that we actually think that we are greater than our master.
  + Jesus says “Love your enemies” and we say, I disagree. Jesus didn’t really mean that.
  + Jesus was really about protecting family values. Jesus was about keeping things the way I’m most comfortable with.
  + **V34-35**
  + …and that’s why, often and recently, the American church has not been identified as the disciples of Jesus. Because we have not been llving as Jesus loved.
  + We’ve been acting like Frankenstein creature.
  + Threatening, demanding, that we get only creatures who are like us…because anyone unlike us is only going to hurt us.
  + Meanwhile, Jesus is washing the feet of the man that will turn him over to be crucified and the one who will walk away from him as he hangs on a cross.
* **Back to 2)**
  + Brothers and sisters…its time to repent and love like Jesus loves.
  + And the amazing thing is, when we do that…we get exactly the family that the creature wanted. That’s what the church is…and what the church becomes.
  + A family that loves each other unconditionally.
  + With a deep love that seeks to outdo one another in showing honor.
  + And like our creator, that love eventually overflows to create more family.
  + **V 17**
  + Did you see what Jesus says? He says, “Once you finally figure this out…that life and love is not about getting for yourself…but serving and giving yourself away…when you finally begin to practice this…you will find the happiness that you are looking for.”
  + You know why? Because this is the very purpose that we all look for.
  + This is what all creatures want from their creation- the answer to the question- WHY DID YOU MAKE ME?
  + God’s answer is- to Love like I have loved you.
  + To be fruitful and multiply my love so that this family of God increases.
  + In Jesus we have the answer to our 2 most fundamental questions- Will our creator love us…and why has our creator made us.
  + And in that- you find blessedness- happiness- the deepest satisfaction of your soul.
* So, brothers and sisters, its time to repent. Its time to follow our Lord and teacher in loving our enemies. Its time break outside of your protective bubble…into someone else’s disgusting mess…and wash their feet.
* TRANSITION: And I have more good news...Jesus has made a way for you to confess all of your disgusting sin and leave it behind…without fear.
* **3) Jesus washed us by his blood… and is ready for you to keep confessing the sin he has already forgiven you for.**
  + One of the mistakes some Christians make is believing that confession and repentance is something that happens only once.
  + Like it's a thing that happens at conversion…and then should never happen again.
  + But the Scripture does not teach that. And I’m glad that it doesn't.
  + John who wrote this gospel also wrote some letters that are in the New Testament. And in one of those letters he says this-
  + **1 John 1:6-10**
  + **6 If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. 7 If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say, “We have not sinned,” we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**
  + I interpret what Jesus says to Peter in John chapter 13 through this lens- as do many biblical scholars.
  + **John 13:8-9**
  + When Peter says objects to Jesus washing his feet, Jesus replies. If I don’t wash you, you have no part with me.
  + To which Peter says, “Then just give me a whole bath!”
  + **V 10**
  + Jesus says, “You have already had a bath,..but your feet are dirty.”
  + Without getting into too much exegetical detail- here is what Jesus means.
  + Peter, and the other disciples, have left everything behind to follow Jesus. When Jesus called- they followed.
  + They are trusting him- with no safety net.
  + They have placed their trust in his claim to be the Messiah…the promised one from God.
  + IN that respect, Jesus says- I will clean you. I have pardoned you from your sin. This death I am going into tomorrow will be me…the perfect creator…becoming the disgusting creature on a cross.
  + On the cross, Jesus looked like a monster..not a man.
  + He was beaten, and disfigured…so that people looked away from him in disgust..like Frankenstein’s creature.
  + Because on the cross- our sin was on Jesus.
  + By his wounds we are healed.
  + While we were still sinners Christ died for the ungodly.
  + Instead of hunting us down in revenge, like Dr. Frankenstein did the creature- he hunted us down to love and forgive us.
  + And unlike the creature, who held his dead creator in his arms…and found only sorrow and no peace…
  + Instead as we look at Jesus our creator dying- we know that he has made peace by the blood of his cross.
* **Back to 3)**
  + So, in one sense, God saves us all at once. Forgives us and separates from our sin as far as the east is from the west.
  + That’s the bath Jesus is talking about.
  + But what’s the foot-washing?
  + The foot-washing is the ongoing daily communion with God.
  + Its returning to God…where now, already forgiven for our sin…we can boldy confess our sin to him…we can daily receive his unconditional love over and over and over…
  + That’s why we have a brief time of confession in our worship gathering every week.
  + Because when we pretend we don’t sin, as John pointed out in his letter…we are not walking in the light- and it breaks our communion, our fellowship with God.
  + Simon Peter argued with Jesus about footwashing.
  + And then he argued with Jesus about his loyalty.
  + All along, Jesus wanted him to see and confess his sin…To walk in the light and have fellowship with him.
  + If you want a vibrant relationship with your creator…that gives you unconditional love and deep purpose…you have to come out of the shadows…and approach him- even with all of your disgusting sins.
  + He’s not like Victor Frankenstein. He doesn’t recoil in disgust…instead...you know he has already become disgusting for you. Come back, and let him wash your feet.
  + Its not guilt. It's the way you experience the love of your creator over and over again.