

Jesus - The Humble Servant

Jn 13:1-17

1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Introduction:

1. “Our culture is obsessed with self-esteem, self-love, self-fulfillment, and every other kind of selfish pursuit. We are routinely force-fed information about celebrities who are famous merely for being famous. And practically everyone, it seems, craves that kind of fame and recognition. People relentlessly promote themselves, praise themselves and put themselves first. The current gauge of self-worth is the number followers you have on Facebook or Twitter, and no detail of life is too mundane or too trivial to be shared with the world via these ubiquitous internet social media. Obsession with oneself is not only deemed acceptable nowadays; it is considered normal behavior. Our culture has made pride a virtue and humility a weakness.” - John MacArthur
2. With so much attention on self, relationships are bound to suffer.
 - a. We are watching the crumbling of the various foundations on which society is built
 - b. Friendships, marriages and families are falling apart
3. The last night of Jesus' earthly ministry was very eventful.
 - a. He prayed His great High Priestly prayer – taught disciples
 - b. He observed the Passover meal - was betrayed
 - c. Before Jesus went to the cross He taught a lesson on service and humility
4. In these verses, Jesus revealed His heart and His mission.
 - a. He proved that He did not come to be served, but to serve
 - b. What a vivid portrait of the kind of heart we are to have for others.
 - c. God's will is that we learn to give ourselves in service to others.
5. As we look into these verses, I challenge you to let the Lord speak to your heart.
6. Let's take a few minutes and consider “Jesus: The Humble Servant”

I. WHAT JESUS DID - VS 4-5

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

- I think that a few jaws dropped when Jesus did this
- Rather than begin with a lecture - the Master gave them an example
- Jesus saw the need and He took the appropriate action
- Everyone in this culture faced the same problem
 - On good days the roads were covered with a grimy layer of tenacious dust
 - On rainy days every pathway became a quagmire
- In these verses, we see the Master doing the work of a slave.
 - It was customary for a slave to wash the feet of visitors.
 - To not provide this kindness would be considered uncivilized
 - Washing feet was delegated to the lowest ranked slave on the property
 - No servant was available so Jesus became the servant
 - Peter and John had taken care of the preparations for the Passover meal so maybe the disciples figured that they were taking care of this matter also
 - The basin and the pitcher of water were there
 - “I washed feet last time, I’m not doing that again. Its Matthew’s turn. He hasn’t done it in a long time.”
 - “The room was filled with proud hearts and dirty feet. The disciples were fighting for a throne but no one wanted the towel.” - Chuck Swindoll

A. He Got Up From the Meal

1. “He riseth from supper” - supper was being served. This was Jesus’

last meal.

2. Jesus waited as long as He could in order to give the disciples opportunity to serve
3. To be a servant you first have to get up
4. Being a servant means getting up when it is inconvenient to get up

B. He Took Off His Outer Clothing

1. To serve others we might have to lay something else aside
2. A person who is really busy might have to subtract something in order to add service to his life
3. A servant must deny himself something in order to have the time and energy to serve others

C. He Wrapped a Towel Around His Waist and Poured Water into a Basin

1. These were Jesus' preparations for service
2. When I felt the call of God on my life I knew that I had to prepare for service
3. I went to Temple Baptist College and spoke to Dr. Terrell and began my time in Bible college

D. He Began to Wash the Disciples' Feet

1. When it comes to service, at some point we have to begin
2. We can think about service. We can pray about service. But sometime we just have to begin to serve
3. The late Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's hamburger chain was known for his humble service within the multi-billion dollar empire he founded. When asked what made him so successful; he replied, "My MBA." But he didn't mean a Masters of Business Administration. He meant a "mop and bucket attitude." In other

words, no work task was too insignificant for him to tackle; he simply jumped in and got the job done.” Dave Thomas was a high-school dropout and he was always ashamed of that and it would have been easy for him as he tasted success to demand every perk and privilege as a way of covering for his own inadequacies, but instead He lived by the creed of the mop and bucket attitude.

4. Imagine their amazement as their Lord washed their dirty feet
 - a) *None of the disciples rose to wash the feet of the others*
 - b) *So Jesus, Himself, rose, took a pitcher and poured water into a basin, laid aside his outer robe, wrapped a towel around his waist and began to wash the feet of the disciples.*
 - c) *Imagine what shame, regret and sorrow stung the hearts of the disciples knowing that they could have had the joy and honor of washing Jesus’ feet*

5. Peter's Shock – vs 6-7

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

- a) *When Jesus got to Simon Peter, Peter was incredulous!*
- b) *He cannot believe that the Lord would want to serve Him.*
- c) *I stand amazed when I consider all that the Lord has done, is doing and will do in my life.*
 - (1) That He would love me so is beyond my comprehension.
 - (2) After all, there is no merit in any one of us to commend us to God.
 - (3) If we got what we deserved, we would all be in Hell today, but thank God He doesn't give us that which we deserve, He gives that which we do not!

- (4) Salvation and all the benefits of it are the products of God's grace.
- (5) We enjoy what we do, not because we deserve it, but because God gives it even though we don't, Eph. 2:8-9.

6. Peter's Stubbornness - vs 8

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

a) *Peter responded with a strong negative.*

- (1) He told the Lord, in effect, "you will never, no, never wash my feet!"
- (2) This is the equivalent of irreverence.
- (3) After all, the first condition of discipleship is obedience.
- (4) Peter is simply refusing to submit to the Lord and he does so through a display of false humility.
- (5) However, Jesus reminded him of a great truth.
- (6) Unless a man is willing to submit to the commandments of the Lord, he can have no fellowship with the Lord - John 14:15; 21

b) *Obedience is the proof of love.*

7. Peter's Submission – vs 9

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

a) *After the rebuke Peter said, "If washing my feet will bring me closer to you, then don't stop there, but wash all of me!"*

b) *This is the attitude of surrender that God can bless!*

- (1) He wants us in a place where we are looking to His and His will before anything other consideration.

- (2) Think about it for a moment. What is it that motivates you?
 - (3) Peter was motivated by the thought of being closer to the Lord.
 - (4) Does that move you? If you are right with God it will!
 - (5) If it doesn't then that is an indication that there is definite room for improvement in your walk with the Lord
8. Jesus is teaching us that we do not need to get re-saved every time we sin, but we do need to come to Him for forgiveness and restoration of fellowship.

What Jesus Did...

II. WHAT JESUS KNEW

A. *Jesus Knew That the Time Had Come for Him to Leave This World and Go to the Father - vs 1a*

In Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father....

1. Jesus knew He was nearing the end of His earthly ministry.
 - a) *He knew that He is about to go to the cross and suffer for sin.*
 - b) *Yet, through it all, His heart was still filled with love for His disciples.*
 - c) *The Bible says that He loved them "unto the end."*
 - d) *That is, Jesus loved them perfectly, unconditionally and eternally.*
 - e) *His love never wavered, even in the hour of His own crisis.*
2. The pain and suffering of the cross was imminent - but Jesus was focused on others
 - a) *Jesus was facing something we cannot even imagine but He was not focusing on Himself.*
 - b) *He didn't say to the disciples, "Don't you care what I'm facing?"*
 - c) *He was preparing the disciples for what they would go through at his death*

- d) *When He was arrested, Jesus was concerned that the disciples be allowed to go free*
 - e) *On the cross, Jesus was concerned about his mother's welfare*
 - f) *During His last hours, Jesus ministered to the repentant thief*
3. Here's the question - If you knew that you would die a terrible death tomorrow, what would you be focused on?
- a) *I'd probably be thinking about myself and what I would go through*
 - b) *I'd be making sure that everything was in order*
4. What a great encouragement this is for you and me!
- a) *You see, Jesus loves us with the same kind of love with which He loved His disciples.*
 - b) *Paul tells us that nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus - Rom, 8:38-39.*
 - c) *Regardless of what transpires in your life and mine, we are loved perfectly, unconditionally and eternally with the awesome, agape love of Almighty God!*

B. Jesus Knew that the Father Had Put All Things Under His Power and That He had Come from the Father and Was Going to the Father

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

1. Jesus knew who He was and yet he humbled Himself before these disciples and washed their feet
2. All authority in heaven and earth was his but that did not engender any pride or arrogance in His heart
3. "I'm the Son of God. I'm the Creator of the universe. I'm going to the cross tomorrow. I have a lot on my mind. Someone, get that water over there and wash my feet."

C. **Jesus Knew Who Would Betray Him**

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

1. There was Judas - full of deceit, full of hypocrisy, about to hand the Savior over to the Jewish officials
 - a) *He knew that this man had never been saved - John 6:64; 70.*
 - b) *He was washing the feet of the very man who would, later that same evening, betray Him to His enemies.*
 - c) *Jesus had indicated that Judas was not a true believer*
2. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him...
 - a) *But He didn't distance Himself from Judas*
 - b) *But He didn't point his finger at Judas and say, "How dare you betray me, after all I've done for you?"*

- c) *But He still loved Judas to the end.*
3. Jesus washed the feet of Judas just as He washed the feet of the other disciples
 4. There was no resentment, no anger, no bitterness, only sorrow for the terrible decision Judas had made and the consequences that would follow.
 5. Can we serve those who don't deserve it?
 6. Can we serve those who can't pay us back

What Jesus Knew.....

III. WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

A. *Jesus Gave Us an Example*

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

1. Jesus set the standard by which everyone of His servants is to live
2. Jesus showed us that we are all expected to serve one another
3. His disciples had been guilty of arguing about who would be first in the Kingdom of Heaven - Luke 22:24

24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

4. Jesus said that the path to greatness is through humility.
5. Salvation is more than me getting what I need
6. The greatest human tragedy is a person never trusting Christ as his Savior. The second greatest tragedy is that a person would trust Christ as Savior, experience His love, experience His grace - but

never translate that into service toward others.

7. A wealthy American traveler told the story of how he was visiting a hospital in Southeast Asia. He entered just as a young missionary nurse was cleaning the sores of a sick, dirty, elderly man who was found lying in a gutter. The wealthy man said to the nurse, “I wouldn’t do that for a million dollars.” She answered quietly and firmly, “Neither would I.”
8. It is the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts that makes us feet washers

B. Jesus Gave An Exhortation – vs 16

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

1. The lesson here is simple and clear
2. Notice that Jesus just didn't serve the ones He preferred.
 - a) *It might have been easy to wash John's feet – beloved disciple*
 - b) *John and James were always trying to get just a little bit ahead of the others.*
 - c) *What about Peter? He was the one who would deny Him 3x*
 - d) *What about Thomas? He was the one who would doubt*
 - e) *What about Judas? He was the one who for 30 pieces of silver would sell His Lord to the enemies.*
 - f) *Jesus didn't allow any of this to cloud His love or His service!*
 - g) *He treated them all equally teaching us a tough lesson*
3. We all have people that we seem to connect with and we have no trouble serving these folks.
 - a) *However, the true servant soon learns that he must serve all and serve them equally.*
 - b) *The true servant is not allowed to pick favorites, but must have the*

heart of Christ and be willing to serve his enemies just as readily as he serves his friends

c. Jesus Gave An Expectation – vs 17

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

1. Jesus says that if we know these things, we will be "happy" if we do them!
 - a) *Happy means "Blessed."*
 - b) *When we take the example of Jesus and put it into action, we can be assured of the Lord's blessing on our lives.*
 - c) *There will come a time when there will be no greater joy than that of being able to serve another in the name of the Lord!*
2. Why do we seem to find it so difficult to serve another human?
 - a) *Why does it seem to strain us so?*
 - b) *Jesus never had a problem with serving.*
 - c) *It came as natural to Him as breathing does to you and me.*
 - d) *God help us to develop a servant's heart.*
 - e) *That is, we need to get to the place where we are more concerned with the welfare of our neighbor than we are of our own - Phil. 2:4.*
 - f) *We need to reach the place where we are more concerned with promoting our brother than we are ourselves.*
 - g) *I don't know about you, but I have a lot of work to do in this area!*

Conclusion:

1. When you are tempted to think of your dignity, your prestige, or your personal "rights," open your Bible right here to John 13 and get a good look at Jesus - clothed as a slave, kneeling, washing dirt off the feet of sinful men who are utterly indifferent to His impending death. To go

from being God in glory (vs 3) to washing the feet of self-centered, disciples (vs 4-5) is a very long step.

2. Richard De Haan said, “It was once my privilege to preach in a church where love and warmth were especially evident. I was impressed by the members' willingness to pitch in and work. On the Sunday I spoke the women of the church had provided a bountiful meal. Following the dinner, after most of the people had left, I noticed a distinguished-looking couple clearing the tables and dumping the paper plates into large plastic bags. When I complimented them on what they were doing, they said matter-of-factly, "Oh, we're the 'garbage detail.' We volunteered to clean up after every church function. We consider it a ministry." How wonderful that this man and woman were not only available to serve the Lord, but they humbly did what others might consider demeaning work. These dear people were glad to be what they cheerfully called the "garbage detail." Some members of the body of Christ are called to serve in places of prominence; others to labor quietly behind the scenes. Regardless of what the Lord asks us to do, let's be willing to do it by serving one another through love, knowing that ultimately we are serving the Lord.”
3. Nothing indicates love more clearly than humble service toward others.