

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 3RD-4TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

WASHING FEET (JOHN 13:1-11)

Chapter 13 opens on a supper that takes place between Jesus and His disciples during the time of the Passover (vs. 1-2).

- They're celebrating the feast that remembered God's redemption of the Jews from the hands of the Egyptians.
- Jesus deeply loved these young men, even the one who would ultimately betray Him (vs. 2). It's interesting to note that John includes some details related to Christ's identity (vs. 3).
- Jesus knows who He truly is and it's in that security that He performs this incredible act.
- Our actions flow out of our identity and inner character—what we are is revealed by what we do.
- Jesus Christ—God incarnate, the creator and sustainer of all life—is about to reveal something incredible about His character.

Jesus washes the feet of His disciples (vs. 4-5).

- In first-century Palestine, people walked long distances in sandals, roads were dusty and dirty, and hospitality required that the host arrange for water to be available for the washing of feet upon arrival to the house.
- Rather than washing the feet in the basin itself, water was poured over the feet from one vessel and caught in another.

Acts of service like this were common duties for disciples to perform for their teacher.

- However, foot-washing was considered too demeaning for any Jew, and so it was usually assigned to a non-Jewish slave.
- Jesus' adoption of this stance would have been shocking and needed an explanation.
- Jesus was quite literally assuming the position of the lowliest of servants (vs. 5).

Leave it to Peter to be the one who demands an explanation (vs. 6).

- It would have been unthinkable for Peter to imagine anyone in the group washing feet—much less Jesus!
- But Jesus defied cultural norms in order to set an example by serving these men to meet what was a very real need.

The significance of Christ taking on the form of a slave to wash feet wasn't fully understood by the disciples: most likely because they weren't fully aware of the extent of His glory (vs. 7).

- The full magnitude of Christ's glory will be seen by all of creation in the Kingdom of God. What we think we know now about His glory is only a shadow—this makes the sacrifice of Christ more glorious than we even know.

Peter begins to protest as Jesus starts to wash His feet: maybe he thinks he's too unworthy to have this act performed for him (vs. 8).

- Peter was too "humble" to have his feet washed, but not too humble to command the Lord.
- But unless we humble ourselves and receive His love for us in Him cleansing us, we will have no part of Him.
- What in the world do verses 9-10 mean?

When we first come to Jesus, we're bathed; we're clean all over (this is what the Bible calls justification by faith, salvation).

- It's the washing away of all our guilt and sin: past, present, and future.
- As we walk through life, Jesus knows our feet will be defiled during our walk, and that needs to be washed away through the daily disciplines of confession and repentance (vs. 10).

Not all of these disciples were "clean": Judas Iscariot would betray Him (vs. 11).

- Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him and sell Him out for 30 pieces of silver, yet, Jesus still washed His feet.
- This act was a symbol for the glory of the gospel—the fact that the God of the entire universe would become a man and walk amongst us to suffer and die in our place.

SERVANTS AND MASTERS (JOHN 13:12-20)

Jesus' act of washing feet was an example to all His disciples (vs. 12-15).

- "Washing feet" was literal, but it's also a figurative and symbolic example of what Christian service really looks like.
- It's not convenient, comfortable, safe, or even pleasant.
- It's messy; it takes sacrifice, bravery, and a willingness to be inconvenienced and hurt.
- Jesus never tells us we should serve others "only if we feel 'called' to it" (that's something we made up).
- All followers of Jesus Christ should be engaged in a lifelong journey of radically serving and meeting the needs of others—even and especially when it's messy!
- As Jesus' servants, we're not greater than our master: If He served, so should we (vs. 16).

If we serve, we will be blessed (vs. 17).

- It's not enough to simply know that we should serve—we have to actually do it.
- You are the best manipulator you know. You are capable of feeding yourself thousands of reasons for why you can't and shouldn't serve others.
- We rob others of blessings, and we rob ourselves when we ignore this command!

It is a simple fact that life is better when we make it about others versus making it all about ourselves.

- We will receive the blessing of God in our lives as we serve through a sense of purpose, a joy in seeing others' needs met, and the presence of the Holy Spirit as He flows through us.
- Do you believe this or do you believe the world's demonic deception of self-centeredness?

Jesus then reveals that one of the men at the table will betray Him (vs. 18-20).

- This is a fulfillment of prophecy in Ps. 41:9, and it's an example to us as servants of Jesus: Not everyone we love and serve will treat us kindly in return, but we love them unconditionally anyway.
- Even though Jesus would be betrayed, Jesus' work would continue through the disciples He would send in His name (vs. 20).

BETRAYAL (JOHN 13:21-30)

Jesus was troubled and grieved in His spirit as He announced to His disciples that one of them would betray Him (vs. 21).

- His disciples are shocked and dismayed as they looking around at each other trying to figure out who will do this unthinkable act (vs. 22).
- Peter motions to the "disciple Jesus loves" who is sitting closest to Jesus to find out who it is, and so John asks Jesus (vs. 23-25).

As a secret sign to John, Jesus says it's the one to whom He will hand the bread after dipping it in the Passover elements (vs. 26).

- Jesus dips the bread and hands it to none other than Judas Iscariot.
- Scholars often speculate on Judas' motives for betraying Jesus, but it appears that at least one of them was greed (John 12:6).
- Others think it was a bit more nuanced than that.

Judas might have been a political opportunist who followed Jesus because he thought Jesus would overthrow the Romans and usher in a new Jewish kingdom with money, power, and position given to Jesus' associates.

- But when Jesus started talking about the cross, suffering, and dying, Judas decided to cut his losses and get out with a profit.

Many people will follow Jesus in this life because, like Judas, they want what they think Jesus can give them: health, wealth, happiness, miracles, breakthrough, power, etc.

- But as soon as Jesus' program involves suffering, difficulty, sacrifice, and delayed gratification, they're willing to sell Him out and walk away.

"Am I more in love with what Jesus can give me or do I actually love Jesus?"

As Judas takes the bread from Jesus, John says that "Satan entered Him" (vs. 27).

- Jesus tells Judas to do quickly what He was about to do. Judas oversaw the money and was adamant about caring for the poor (12:5), so the disciples assumed he was running a ministry errand (vs. 28-29).
- Judas, overtaken completely by Satanic darkness, slithers away into the night (vs. 30).

A NEW COMMAND (JOHN 13:31-38)

Judas was setting everything into motion for Jesus' arrest, trial, humiliation, condemnation, beating, crucifixion, and death.

- Yet, all of this would bring God glory: Jesus uses the word "glory" five times in vs. 31-32.
- The cross would reveal the glorious love of God for humanity in a new way.
- The cross would reveal God's glorious commitment to restoring humanity.

Jesus tells His disciples that He's only going to be with them a little longer and then He's going away to a place they cannot come (vs. 33).

- To the men who had left everything to follow Him, this would've been a tough pill to swallow.
- How would they continue to follow Him and do His work if He wasn't there to tell them what to do?
- What would His mission look like? What command of His would they need to follow?

As His clothes are still wet from washing their feet, Jesus gives them a new command: "Love one another, just as I have loved you" (vs. 34).

- Love is to be the single defining mark of a disciple of Jesus—a nonnegotiable in following Him.
- Love is to be our greatest evangelistic tool as followers of Jesus—the thing that the unbelieving world looks at and wants to participate in (vs. 35).

In order to keep this command, we are to love other disciples of Jesus just as Jesus has loved us.

- This is a love that gives (Jn. 3:16).
- This is a love that serves (Jn. 13:14).
- This is a love that sacrifices (Jn. 15:13).
- Unfortunately, church in America is not known as a place where unconditional, giving, serving, sacrificial love is displayed: it's often known as a place of conflict, gossip, entitlement, selfishness, and judgmentalism.

Peter wanted more details, and he was committed to following Jesus even unto death (vs. 36-37).

- Ultimately, Peter's commitment to Jesus was immature and wasn't as strong as he thought—he would deny Jesus three times (vs. 38).
- Peter's commitment to Jesus is solidified after Peter witnesses Jesus' commitment to Peter: after the work of the cross, the restoration of Peter, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

DO I TRULY LOVE OTHERS LIKE JESUS?

- Jesus willingly gave up His rights, embraced obscurity, and made His life about the Father's glory and the needs of humanity.
- Do I notice the needs of others or am I more obsessed with them noticing my needs?
- Am I willing to listen to them? Sacrifice for them? Make time for them? Get to know them?
- God › Marriage/children › Church › World

AM I COMMITTED TO BEING A SERVANT?

- We don't serve others from our need for approval or for significance (Rom. 12:9), we don't advertise our acts of service for applause (Matt. 6:3), and we don't enable self-destructive or negative behaviors (1 Tim. 5:3-6).
- Serving in the way Jesus has called us to serve involves selflessness, sacrifice, and action.
- If those things aren't involved, you're not serving.

HAVE I BEEN WASHED AND AM I LETTING HIM WASH ME?

- Sin has turned us inward. The only cure for a narcissistic, self-centered, proud, entitled heart is for it to be washed and cleansed by the sacrificial love of Jesus.
- Unless you let Him wash you like that, you'll have no part of Him (vs. 8).
- Sometimes our feet get dirty as we walk through this broken, self-centered world: We return to Him each day to be washed and reminded of true love.