

A Lesson on Love



Learning to Wash Your Brother's Feet

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John 13:1–15

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.

²And supper being ended, the devil
having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot,
Simon's son, to betray him;

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

⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his
garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

⁵After 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.

⁶Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and
Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my
feet?

⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What
I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know
hereafter.

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

⁹Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

¹⁰Jesus 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.

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

¹²So 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?

¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Here we find the Lord Jesus teaching his disciples a lesson on love. One of the greatest lessons on love I have read was about a true servant named Mother Teresa, who died in 1997, but her acts of service are beyond numbers. One particular incident reflects the heart from which she served. She was working among the slums of Calcutta, dressing the wounds of a leper. An American tourist observed her work and asked if he could take a picture? She granted permission and that tourist framed his shot. Through the camera's lens he could see the world-renowned nun tenderly replacing a

bloody bandage that covered a gaping hole where the leper's nose used to exist. The photographer could also smell the stench of this wound as he moved in for a closer shot. After capturing several pictures, the American tourist said "Sister; I would not do what you are doing for ten million dollars". Mother Teresa replied, "Neither would I, my friend, neither would I." A lesson on love can't be bought.

Here Jesus needed to teach His disciples a valuable lesson. Even though this was the closing hours of Jesus life; He never stopped trying to help others. Jesus loved His own and He loved them until the end. Even those who did not love Him, such as Judas, who would betray Him.

The washing of the disciple's feet would teach them the importance of humble service. Here was the creator of the world, yet He did not consider Himself above the humble task of washing His disciple's feet. Even knowing one of them would betray Him, and the rest of them would forsake Him because of their fear. Yet the Lord over all picks up a towel and a basin to wash the feet of all the disciples.

Now most of us try to make a name for ourselves and become popular figures, but not Jesus. He was not a promoter of self. We read in **Philippians 2:7-8.** **⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:** **⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** The Lord would teach a lesson about real love and its willingness to serve others and not always about our self. You see, Jesus knew about the competitive spirit that had come into the life of His disciples.

We read in **Luke 22:24–26.** ²⁴ **And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.** ²⁵ **And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.** ²⁶ **But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.** I think they may have been jockeying for position to be the first at the table, knowing they were going to have a meal with Jesus. Don't forget the seating arrangements of Jewish feasts were very definite. The table was arranged with a guest of honor on the right side and the second on the left. So which disciple would sit in the honored seat? If we are not careful pride will sneak into our lives and cause us some major trouble. We read in **Proverbs 28:25a. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife.** This same strife was taking place in the disciple's life. If we are not very careful we could seek to make a name for our self and try to promote our self, rather than just love and serve. We must guard against the spirit to promote self. I sometimes think about when I read the book of Psalms why I can't find one place where David bragged about his great victory over the giant Goliath? If it had been in the present day there would have been volumes wrote about it. He would have been called to give lectures to tell how to kill a giant. But David was not in it to build his own reputation. He was a servant of the Lord. We all need to learn a lesson about love.

I. Love is Being Humble. V 1-5

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. As they were assembled for the last Passover Jesus expressed His love to His disciples and after the supper was over, He gave them a lesson about how true love is humble. The one thing that should have occurred when the disciples and Christ came into the upper room was the washing of their feet. The basin and towel and water were present but no one volunteered to do the washing. It was common in every home to have the feet washed after spending the day on the dusty paths. Normally a servant tended to this lowly task. However, that night in the upper room there was only Christ and the twelve. So if the feet were to be washed one of the disciples would have to do it, for Christ would certainly be exempted from such a humble task. But not one of the disciples volunteered to do this humble lowly task of foot washing. Could it have been they felt superior, too important for such a task, or maybe at least greater than the others? **V4 He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded himself.** Jesus gave a needed lesson showing how love is humble. He taught this lesson to a group of men who were having a problem wondering who was the greatest; they were feeling

superior to one another. We read in **Mark 9:33–34. And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? ³⁴ But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.**

This is never good for a fellowship. We get full of self; we are not willing to wash anyone's feet. But Jesus the master, the Lord of all, is washing the feet of the disciples. When we love properly, we will do whatever needs to be done to help in serving the Lord and to care for those in need. Do you have a problem with self? Do you feel too good to wash a brother's feet? Are you trying to do a promotion of self? Today we think too much of our self. We want the nicest car, the biggest house, name brand clothing. Pride will take over. **Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness.** Paul said in **Romans 12:3b. to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.** Someone asked Augustine what was the first of the religious graces and he said "humility". They asked him what the second was and he replied "humility". They asked him what the third was and he said "humility".

II. Love is Being Holy. V 6-10

Verse 6 says Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Peter said, oh no, you will never wash my feet. Then Jesus told Peter, if I do not wash your feet, you will have no part with me. Peter then changed his attitude and said wash me all over. Here, Jesus gives a lesson on how to stay spiritually clean as we walk through a dirty world. How to

remain a holy child of God. The cleaning of the entire body is a picture of what Christ has done for us in salvation. When we are saved, we are cleansed by the blood of Christ.

We read in **Titus 3:5-7**. **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶ Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; ⁷ That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** Jesus is saying you don't need a complete cleansing every day. But we do need a daily washing of our feet because the believer walks in this dirty world and lives in the flesh, and making it very easy to become polluted and defiled. We make sinful choices which hurt our testimony also our fellowship with Christ. So, we need daily cleansing of our feet to do the Lords service properly. We read about this priest that needed to be cleansed before the service in **Ex. 30:18–21**.

¹⁸ Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

¹⁹ For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: ²⁰ When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: ²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations. The need to be clean and holy before the Lord demands our daily cleansing.

This can easily be done by reminding our self of **1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

III. Love is being Helpful. V 12–15

V 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? Jesus would give them a lesson on how love is helpful and does a ministry to help care for the needs of others. Jesus demonstrates to them what love would do. Peter did not understand it all here, Jesus is the Master, the Lord of all and He is doing the work of a servant. To see Jesus do this lowly task that should have been the work of a household servant. In fact, some Jews would not even let a Jewish servant wash their feet; it had to be a Gentile slave doing it. It was a task too lowly for a Jew. Peter did not understand what was going on. Jesus should not be doing this humble work. He was so far above this. How could Jesus be washing the disciples' feet! This was a lesson hard to learn. But love will promote us to help others even in the most humble of services. Helping others is the badge of our greatness. We read here in **V 14–15.**

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. You see, Christ is the designer of the feet of men. Yet in his greatness, He became a servant and washed the feet of His disciples. God states that the greatest person is the person who's willing to serve. It was Jesus who said in **Luke 22:27, I am among you as he that serveth.**

In 1935, a brilliant young man in Knoxville, Tennessee felt the calling of God on his life to be a missionary. He was a doctor and wanted to go to the dangerous country of Korea to serve because he heard of their suffering. He appealed to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist convention, but money was scarce during the depression years and they could not send him. His home church sacrificed and gathered the money to send the young doctor to Korea. In 1950, he was killed by communist. His name was Bill Wallace. Bill could have come home when things were difficult and made a lot of money as a doctor, but he was a servant of Christ, and because of that he was willing to sacrifice and help others. Today because of that sacrifice many have been blessed, and even here in Knoxville, Tennessee is the great church Wallace Memorial in the memory of Bill Wallace for his great service.

As we close this study of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples, we learn of Jesus's love and willingness to wash one clean from their sin. It could be you may feel a need of His cleansing right now if so you can ask God to forgive you.

If you have never received Jesus as your personal savior you can. The bible says in **Roman 3:23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.** If you come to Him. We read in **John 6:37b: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.** If you have never trusted Jesus and ask Him to forgive you of your sin, do it today. The bible says today is the day of salvation.

Now is the accepted time. I will offer a prayer for you. If you are not sure if you died you would go to heaven, please repeat this prayer from your heart.

Dear Lord Jesus, (repeat). I know I am a sinner and I believe you died for my sin on the cross. Forgive me of my sins and help me live a better life for you. In Jesus name Amen! If you prayed that prayer from your heart you are saved according to **Romans 10:13, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** Tell someone what you have done.



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