

The Humble Love of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Good morning once again, brothers and sisters in Christ, visitors.

It is a joy and an honor for me to be here. And I just pray that the Lord will bless and use his word this morning in our lives to make us the people he wants us to be.

Would you please open your Bibles to the book of John? At our church, Iglesia Bautista Nilo de Gracia, Nest of Grace Baptist Church, I've been preaching through the gospel of John for some time now.

In this sermon, I preached recently in John chapter 13, verses 1 through 17. As John 13 opens, as you're going through the gospel of John, there's a definitive shift at this point from the narrative of the public miracles and the conversations of Jesus over the course of his ministry to a more intimate details regarding the final week of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ before his crucifixion.

So beginning here and over the next four chapters, the events and the conversation that John records are private between Jesus and his disciples during their last supper together, followed by Jesus' final discourse.

[1 : 32] And then in chapter 17, Jesus' high priestly prayers, he appeals to his Father in heaven. In these chapters, we see a deep love and intimacy between Jesus and his disciples as the hour of Jesus' crucifixion drew near.

And over these last hours, Jesus prepared the hearts of his disciples for what was coming, humbly displaying his deep love for them as he taught them the significance of his coming death and setting an example for them to follow after his departure.

In our text this morning, we see a clear picture of the magnitude of God's condescension and love in his mission to save sinners, displayed in the incredibly humble act of Jesus physically washing the feet of his disciples.

And for that reason, I've entitled this morning's sermon, The Humble Love of Jesus. So if you wouldn't mind, would you stand with me out of reverence for the word of God as we read John 13, verses 1 through 17.

Now before the feast of Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

[3 : 02] During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper, he laid aside his outer garments and taken a towel, tied it around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet?

Jesus answered him, What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward will understand. Peter said to him, You shall never wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no share with me. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said to him, The one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean.

And you are clean, but not every one of you. For he knew who was to betray him. That was why he said, Not all of you are clean. When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, Do you understand what I have done to you?

[4 : 23] You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. Please join me in a word of prayer. Father God, bless your word, glorify your name, strengthen and encourage your people.

Make us who you want us to be for the sake of your name and your kingdom, Lord, we pray. Amen. Please be seated.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[5 : 27] First of all, I want to see Jesus, we will see Jesus' humble love declared. And secondly, Jesus' humble love displayed. Thirdly, Jesus' humble love despised.

And finally, Jesus' humble love demanded. Beginning first with Jesus' humble love declared, and we see again in verse one, now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of the world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

First of all, it's important to note that this supper that they were sharing, this last supper between Jesus and his disciples, was not the actual Passover supper as is often thought.

John makes this clear that the meal actually took place before the feast of the Passover. And certainly this last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples anticipated and pointed to the coming Passover, where Jesus himself would be the sacrificial lamb, but it was not the actual Passover feast that they shared.

John also reiterates that Jesus knew that his hour had come once again. This is something that he mentioned in the previous chapter. And as we've seen, Jesus knew all throughout his earthly ministry that the hour for him to die and to bear the cup of the wrath of God for his people would certainly come.

[6 : 57] But we've arrived at the portion of Jesus' life where the hour was not coming, but is now here. And Jesus knew that the time that he had left with his disciples was short.

So under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John makes clear that Jesus knew that he would soon depart from this world and return to his Father. And having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

This love for his own is not speaking of the Jewish people in general, as the Apostle John referred in chapter 1 of this gospel.

It says he came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. Specifically here in this text, Jesus is referring to his own, whom the Father has chosen, as we have heard this morning, and given to him as a special possession.

And in the immediate context, he's referring to the twelve disciples. Of course, with the exception of Judas, who, as we will see, was an imposter and a traitor.

[8 : 03] Jesus' own refers to those whom the Father chose before the foundation of the world and whom Jesus subsequently chose to become his disciples. Jesus' great and perfect love towards his disciples is distinguished from his common love for mankind.

And certainly, Jesus has a common love for mankind, and a common love for this world that he came to save and redeem in a general sense. But the deep, saving love of Jesus goes far beyond a general, common love.

And this love for his own is a special, enduring love that was born in eternity past, in the very heart of our triune God, and will extend to all of eternity without end.

It's an unbreakable love. It's a love that cannot and will not end. It's a love that was never based on the merits of the disciples, but based on God's own eternal purposes to save a people for his own possession out of this world, to display his glory as the God of love to all of creation.

Jesus the Son displayed that love perfectly every day of his life toward his own. And John makes clear that he continued loving them to the end, speaking of the end of his earthly life.

[9 : 24] And with these words, he's setting the stage for this incredible display of his love that we see in our text this morning. But before we move on to look at that, it's important to note that this love of Jesus toward his own is not limited to the disciples who were there at that meal with him.

It is just as true of every true disciple of Jesus Christ from every age and from every place. Every true disciple of Jesus Christ is the object of God's eternal and unchangeable love.

We are his possession. We are objects of his love, not because we deserve it, but because he saw something in us that would draw him to us.

No, we are his and we are eternally loved because it pleased him to lavish his love on helpless sinners, on vile enemies, rebels who would have perished eternally without his divine intervention.

We don't deserve his love. We don't gain his love because of anything we do or don't do. This love he freely gives to those whom he has chosen. And it's that love that melts our hearts of stone through the sovereign working of his Holy Spirit, granting us grace to respond in faith and repentance, which are also gifts of his grace, born out of his eternal love toward us.

[10 : 49] Jeremiah 31.3 says, The Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, I have continued my faithfulness toward you.

Christ's love for his own, those for whom he came to earth to redeem with his own precious blood, was never gained by anything that we have done or can offer God, and therefore it can also never be lost.

God is the one who determined whom his own would be and has loved us not just to the end of Jesus' earthly life, but for all of eternity. And as you know, this precious text, Romans 8.35-39 says, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, as it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Knowing all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the love of God, the love of Christ towards his own, and this is the love that we have in Christ by his grace. And that brings us to our second point. Jesus' humble love displayed.

[12 : 24] And before Jesus displays such incredible humility and love in washing the disciples' feet, John inserts in verse 3 what was on Jesus' heart and mind as he did this.

It says, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand and that he had come from God and was going back to God. And we see that Jesus did not wash the feet of his disciples because he had forgotten who he was or where he was from.

He was the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the creator and owner of all things, the eternal Son of God who had always reigned in unapproachable light in the glory of his Father in heaven.

And by any earthly standard, if there was anyone in that room that should have had their feet washed, it would have been Jesus. But Jesus, as we know, did not come to this earth to be served, but to serve.

He came to give his life as a ransom for many and laying aside his dignity, his royal privileges to save his people.

[13 : 31] This verse should remind us of Philippians 2, 5-8, which, speaking of Christ, says, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.

Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, in heaven and earth and under the earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus knew who he was. He knew where he came from. He knew where he was going. Nevertheless, he humbled himself, and he took the lowest form of a servant to display the magnitude of his love toward his own.

Verse 4 says, In the Jewish culture of Jesus' day, because they walked on the dusty roads, wearing sandals, their feet would become filthy and smell, and so it was the custom, when someone arrived at a home, if there was a slave in that home, they would remove the sandals of the person, and they would wash the feet of the visitors who would come.

But it was such a lowly and humiliating task that not even Jewish slaves were allowed to perform this. This was a rule in Israel. It was so incredibly humiliating that only Gentile slaves could take on this task of washing visitors' feet.

[15 : 29] So it must have been incredibly shocking to Jesus' disciples to see him, their Lord, their Master, taking this role of a servant, becoming the lowest of servants, of slaves before them.

And this is why Peter responded the way he did in verse 6. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? And Jesus answered him, What am I doing?

What I am doing now, you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand. And Peter said to him, You shall never wash my feet. And Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

Jesus' word makes clear that this incredibly humble act of washing their feet was not an end in and of itself. It was a picture. It was a symbol of something far greater that they would later come to understand.

And this is why Jesus responded to Peter's reluctance in the way that he did. Jesus was not saying to Peter that unless Jesus physically washed his feet that he would have no part with him.

[16 : 39] The washing that Jesus referred to here was the washing away of sin. The washing that would come by the shedding of his blood in just a few short days. As humbling as it was to wash filthy feet, the greatest humiliation of Christ would come as he died at the hands of men that he had created, that he held together by the word of his power, enduring their insults and blasphemies, mocking and spitting, as they took the life of the author of life, as he, the sinless son of God, became sin, the one who knew no sin, so that they, we, could become the righteousness of God in him.

And if Peter's pride would keep him from having his feet washed by Jesus, how could he possibly accept the washing of his soul? As humbling as it was to have Jesus wash their feet physically, it's far more humbling to have our entire being washed by his blood.

To be washed by Jesus is to openly confess and believe that one is so filthy, so undone, so unrighteous, that they have absolutely nothing to offer him in return.

There is no way to repay Jesus in any way for what he has done to save sinners. And anyone who will hold to even one ounce of his own righteousness or their own merits are not trusting in Christ's blood alone to wash them and they will have no share with him.

Naked, we come to him for dress. Helpless and empty-handed, we come to him for grace. Our salvation, our being purified and cleansed from our sins is one-sided.

[18 : 31] It's a monergistic act performed by Christ and Christ alone and we cannot contribute to it or add anything to it. And as hard as it was for Peter to have Jesus wash his feet, it's much harder for a sinful soul to abandon everything, abandon their own righteousness, supposed righteousness, and to cling to Jesus alone for cleansing and salvation.

If that is exactly the demand that Jesus makes, he must wash us for we cannot wash ourselves. And those who will be saved will be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

And though Peter probably did not understand all these things at that time, he got the hint and he quickly changed his attitude towards our Lord and he gladly received this foot washing. Peter was hasty and sometimes made rash decisions based on his emotions rather than on wisdom.

But Peter's love for the Lord was genuine and he did not want to lose him. So he replied, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. And Jesus said to him, the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean and you are clean.

And it's important to note that in Jesus' response to Peter wanting to be washed completely, Jesus changes the application that he was making. In the first instance, Jesus was clearly applying the foot washing to his work of saving and justifying sinners.

[20 : 07] He was speaking of the moment that they are born again, that they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and they are washed once and for all. But here, in his response to Jesus, or in his response to Peter, Jesus shifts the analogy to speak of sanctification and the ongoing process of repentance in the life of a believer.

one who has been justified and baptized into Christ, cleansed once and for all from their sin, is saved and has no need of anything else regarding their standing before our holy God.

They do not need to be bathed or baptized into Christ again. But those who have been justified do have daily need of confession and repentance of their sins.

We need to continually come before our Lord at the throne of grace to have our feet washed by Jesus. He is our advocate before God. And when we sin, we are able to confess our sin to him.

And he is faithful and he is just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness. So these are the two applications of the foot washing in the life of all believers.

- [21 : 16] Remembering, first of all, that we have been saved and cleansed once and for all by Jesus' blood that was poured out for us on the cross. And second of all, the need to come to him daily to wash our feet from the remaining corruption that dirties our feet as we walk in this world and strive against our flesh.

And that brings us to our third point this morning, Jesus' humble love despised. And what an incredible act of love Jesus displayed to his disciples and what loving words he shared with them as he washed their feet.

Yet in the midst of that intimate moment, Jesus added some ominous words. He said, The one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean and you are clean, speaking to Peter.

But then he added, But not every one of you. And John immediately adds parenthetically in verse 11, For he knew who was to betray him and why, that was why he said, Not all of you are clean.

So this clear and cutting statement we know was said regarding Judas. Judas was not clean because he had not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore had not truly been washed from his sins and justified before God.

- [22 : 37] And though he had experienced the same teaching and the same love of our Lord Jesus Christ, his hard heart had not been changed. He was a hypocrite. He did not love the Lord Jesus Christ.

He followed him for the benefit or the personal gain that he could get as we've seen, as John spells out earlier in his gospel. He pretended to be concerned about the pouring out of the ointment on Jesus' feet so that it could be sold to help the poor.

That's at least what he expressed with his mouth. But in his heart, he desired for that money to go into the bag from which he would steal from the disciples' money bag. His selfish heart was willing to put on the appearance of religion when it was convenient.

But he was unmoved by the deep love of Jesus that was displayed to him. And the same hands that washed the feet of the other eleven disciples had washed his feet.

But he already had it in his heart to betray our Lord. Verse 2 tells us the devil himself had put it into the heart of Judas to betray him. And what a truly terrifying passage this is.

- [23 : 51] We can learn from this that there is absolutely no benefit to our eternal souls being near the things of God if we have not truly been washed by the blood of Jesus.

What a warning this should be for anyone who would come to church for their own personal gain or purposes or to seek positions in the church for their own personal glory.

if your aim is something other than Christ other than his glory then the day may come when you may simply be a tool in the hands of the devil.

True Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and cannot be possessed by demons as John goes to show that the devil entered would later enter into Judas later on in this chapter.

but Christians can be deceived and we can go astray for a time but a true Christian cannot be fully and finally led by the devil but it is not so with those who are hypocrites those who pretend to be something that they are not.

- [24 : 55] Judas despised the love of Christ. He was so bent on betraying the Lord Jesus Christ for 30 pieces of silver that he remained unmoved by the humble display of Jesus washing his feet.

And to betray the humble love of Jesus Christ is a gross and a heinous sin that comes from the very heart of hell itself. This perverse betrayal of Judas reminds me of a quote by Thomas Brooks from his books Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices and he says quote To render good for evil is divine to render good for good is human to render evil for evil is brutish but to render evil for good is devilish and that is exactly what Judas returned.

Jesus had only loved Judas in every way possible and Judas returned that with an evil betrayal. May the Lord have mercy and guard each one here from each one of us from ever treating our Lord in such a way.

finally this morning let's look at Jesus' humble love demanded. The application of Jesus' foot washing did not end regarding what Jesus had done and continues to do for us but goes to show what Jesus expects of us as believers as we live and serve him in the church.

he went on to say in verse 12 when he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place he said to them do you understand what I have done for you?

[26 : 38] You call me teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you.

Truly truly I say to you a servant is not greater than their master and his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things blessed are you if you do them.

And what an important and timely message this is for all of us. Jesus did not humble himself before the disciples in such an amazing way so that they could go out and be proud and be selfish in their relationships with one another.

He was setting for them a clear example of not only how he loved them but also how they were to love one another. Jesus' point was not that they make a ritual out of washing one another's feet but rather that each and every one of his disciples would serve one another with a genuine love and a genuine humility all the days of their life.

And as Paul would later make clear to the Philippian church who were facing conflict and division in the church in light of the humiliation of Christ we are to think like he thought and we are to act like he acted.

[28 : 02] We are to do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others as more significant than ourselves. We are to each look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.

And as Christians like Christ we are not here on earth to be served but to serve. We are not to serve others based on what we can get out of it or what they think of us or how they treat us.

We are to serve one another because that is what the Lord has done and continues to do for us every day of our lives. And those who claim to live in him must walk as Jesus walked.

Christians are to be a humble and a contrite people just as Jesus was while he was on earth. Isaiah 66 1 and 2 says thus says the Lord heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.

What is the house that you should build for me and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hands have made and so all these things came to be declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

[29 : 15] What a terrible and a disgusting thing is pride. The word Christian and prideful should never be used in the same sentence unless it's to repent of this terrible sin.

When we look at the incredible condescension of the Son of God toward us how could it possibly occur to us to elevate ourselves or think too highly of ourselves?

How careful we must be dear church to not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to but with sober humility consider others as better than ourselves and look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others.

This is true of all Christians and is especially true of leaders in the church and any leader in the church of Jesus Christ is a servant leader and there is no place for exalting ourselves over others.

We should not seek positions of leadership in the church out of pride or desire to be domineering over others. Rather we should seek to humbly serve in the body of Christ according to the gifts and the callings that God has given to each one by his grace.

[30 : 26] There should therefore be no jealousy toward anyone or despising one another but each one should serve humbly and faithfully as the Lord has called us and allowed us to.

The security and the assurance that Jesus had of his rightful place and his rightful inheritance in heaven did not lead him to be arrogant but to genuine humility.

We should never see anything as beneath us if Christ could stoop to such servitude. And just as Christ took off his outer garments in order to humbly serve his disciples so we must take off anything that will feed our pride or cause us to keep us from humbly serving our brothers and sisters in Christ's church.

Jesus even humbled himself before his known enemy and betrayer washing the very feet of Judas. How much more should we humbly serve and love every one of our brothers and sisters when opportunity presents itself in spite of what they think of us in spite of the way they treat us.

Our love towards others should not first be dependent upon their love toward us but on God's love towards sinners like us and through his son Jesus Christ our Lord.

[31 : 48] Let us never forget what the Lord has done for us his own his church. Some scholars take this humble act of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples to be a picture of the entire gospel mission in a nutshell.

And though he was God and all things were his yet he laid aside his garments of heavenly glory and privilege taking the form of a servant to pour out his own blood through his humble and sacrificial death in order to wash us from our sins.

The eternal God of glory humbly washing the filthy feet of sinful men. What a glorious picture of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that is exactly what he has done for us if we are in him. He has washed us of our filth. We have nothing to offer him but he has loved us with an eternal love.

Yet he came to this dark world to wash us to save us to reconcile us to God that we may share with him in the eternal glory from which he came.

[32 : 57] That was Christ's mission where his humble love was put on full display and that dear church is our mission as Christ's ambassadors while he has us here in this world not to be proud kings but to be humble servants dying to ourselves daily and loving even the least of these that he puts before us.

May he give us grace to live lives worthy of the gospel of our salvation and may he alone receive glory in the church forever and ever.

Amen.