

Washing the Feet

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[0 : 00] John chapter 13, we're going to be reading the first 17 verses. Very familiar passage, but one that never grows old.

John chapter 13, it was just before the Passover feast, and Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. And Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God.

And so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus replied, You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.

[1 : 26] No, said Peter, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered, Unless I wash you, you have no part with me. Then Lord, Simon Peter replied, Not just my feet, but my hands and my head as well.

And Jesus answered, A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet. His whole body is clean, and you are clean, though not every one of you.

For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

Do you understand what I have done for you? He asked them. You call me teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am.

Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

[2 : 33] I tell you the truth, No servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Well, thank you all for welcoming me back here tonight. I appreciate opportunities to come and to see your face and to worship with you.

I want to apologize publicly to Jason for giving him just a little bit of a scare by rolling in at 5 o'clock tonight. The route that I usually take to Bremen, I forgot, is partially closed.

Is it not anymore? Is it open now? Does anybody know? 30? It's open now? Okay. Well, anyway, as I was about to leave the house, I thought, I think 30 is closed.

And the other route took me a little longer. So, Jason, if that gave you any angst, I'm sorry. You all can turn with me in your Bibles tonight to John 13, where Pastor Jason is read from.

[3 : 41] I don't get to see you very often, many of you, and so let me ask you, how are you doing? How are you doing in these days?

How are you feeling about life in this world? And your place in it, as a follower of Christ, when it seems that that's not the most popular thing these days.

Are you weary? Uncertain? Fearful, perhaps? Eager for Jesus to return? Do you find yourself praying, come, Lord Jesus?

You ever feel like an exile? Maybe like this world is not really your home. Do you find yourself longing for the new heavens and the new earth? Can't wait. The passage that we want to look at tonight begins a section of John's Gospel that I think is deeply relevant and helpful for days like the ones that we are living in, if we have ears to hear and hearts to understand.

John, just to give you a little context, John 12 wraps up Jesus' public ministry that John records for us. Anyway, and chapter 13 starts a private evening between Jesus and his disciples.

[5 : 03] The other Gospel writers, you'll recognize it, is the night when Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper, when he observes the last Passover with his disciples and institutes the Lord's Supper.

Now, John doesn't tell us about instituting the Lord's Supper, but he tells us a lot of other things that the other Gospel writers don't tell us, things that Jesus taught that night in that upper room.

Sometimes it's called the upper room discourse. Things that Jesus taught his disciples, and he takes from John 13 through 17 to do it. There's five chapters here that the other Gospels really don't give us.

And what I think Jesus is doing in John 13 through 17 is preparing his disciples. What's he preparing them for? He's preparing them for immediately for his death, which is about to take place.

He's going to be betrayed this night when Jesus is teaching. This is the night he's betrayed. He's going to be executed the next morning and buried the next evening before sundown and the Sabbath begins.

[6 : 05] And so he's preparing his disciples for that. But more than that, he's preparing his disciples for the time when he is going to be absent from the earth. Bodily absent from the earth.

Because not long after he dies and is buried, we know that on the third day he rises from the dead, and then not long after that he ascends into heaven. And Jesus, who has been with these disciples for three years, day and night, all of a sudden is going to be gone.

Physically, they're not going to be able to see him, to touch him, to receive bread when he hands it to him. They're not going to be able to lay eyes on him. He's going to be gone. Now, he's going to be present with them by a spirit flowing in them.

And that's one of the things he teaches them in these chapters about the giving of the Holy Spirit in a special way for his disciples. But he is preparing his disciples for life between his two comings, between his first coming and his second coming.

And so I think John 13 through 17, don't worry, I'm not going to try to preach all of it tonight. John 13 through 17 is a really timely word for us.

[7 : 17] It's for disciples living in this world, waiting for the second coming of Christ. That's us. That's right now. So really, any time since Jesus has said it, up till now, it's a timely word.

Maybe we feel it more sometimes than others. We sense the reality that this world is not our home, that we're just passing through, that we don't have to hang all of our hopes and dreams on the kingdoms of this world, on our own country, on any of that.

We hang it on the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he's shepherding his disciples towards a period after an intense three years present with them, he's no longer going to be physically present.

That's the time that you and I live in. Now, we never had Jesus physically present with us. None of us were alive back then. We've always lived in this period of time that Jesus is preparing them for.

But I hope thinking about it together tonight will be something of an encouragement to us. How should we live in that world where Jesus is bodily absent? What comforts are there for us? What challenges? What warnings?

[8 : 20] What should we expect? Jesus is sweetly, gently, faithfully, and forcefully preparing his disciples for his death and then for life while awaiting his second coming.

And maybe strangely to us, it starts with washing their feet, which is the passage that Pastor Jason has just read for us. That's really strange.

That may feel weird to us. That may feel odd to us. But before I get into why this is how the evening starts, besides the fact that it is, this is just what happened, notice with me that Jesus is doing just what I've said.

He's preparing his disciples for his absence. So here in chapter 13, verse 1. Now, I'm reading from the ESV, which is a little bit different than what Pastor Jason read from, which I think was probably the NIV.

Okay? So a little bit different, some of the translation, but you'll get it. Now, before the feast of the 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.

[9 : 32] Now, as Jesus makes it very clear that he's leaving, now this is John writing at this point, this isn't Jesus speaking yet, but Jesus is going to make it clear that night, and John, looking back, it's very clear to him that Jesus has left.

He's been gone for years when John writes this. As clear as Jesus makes it that he is leaving, he also makes it very clear that his disciples are staying. You don't get to come with me, not just yet, anyway.

So, Jesus, his time has come to depart out of the world, having loved his own, they're still in the world, who are in the world. Jesus going out of the world, the disciples remaining in it.

That's the setting for this whole upper room discourse. Jesus repeats it in verse 3, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God, and was going back to God.

He's leaving. He's going back. This keeps going in chapters 13 through 17. Look down at verse 33. We didn't read this earlier, but just jump down a little bit in chapter 13 to verse 33.

[10 : 32] Little children, yet a little while, I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, where I am going, you cannot come. And then verse 36. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going?

Jesus answered him, where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow after. Afterward. They can't come now.

But verse, jump down to chapter 14. Jesus is preparing a place for them. Maybe I am going to preach all of 13 through 17. We'll see. Chapter 14 and verse 13.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, he's going away, and preparing a place for you, I will come again, and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. This period of time, in between the comings of Christ, is not indefinite.

You don't stay here forever. Eventually, Jesus takes you to be with him. And if you zone out after this, that's okay. What I want you to know is that Jesus is going to take you to be with him.

[11 : 35] It's not always going to be like this. There's something better coming. Jesus keeps going. Look at verse 28 in chapter 14.

You heard me say to you, I am going away, and I will come to you. If you love me, you would have rejoiced, because I'm going to the Father. The Father is greater than I. So he's going to the Father. Jump over to chapter 16, verses 5 through 7.

But now I am going to him who sent me. And none of you ask me, where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.

For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And there's a theme that Jesus developed several times in these chapters, 13 through 17.

The giving of the helper, the advocate, the paraclete, the Holy Spirit. What do you need to know while Jesus is bodily absent? That you have the third person of the Trinity dwelling in you.

[12 : 36] God himself is still with you, just like when Jesus was here. God is with you, but he's dwelling in you by his spirit. That's something you need to know in between the two comings of Christ.

You're not alone, even though Jesus is not bodily present. And then in chapter 17, he prays for them. I hope when you come to prayer meeting, you find it encouraging to hear other people praying for you.

To be able to bring your request, and to hear your brother or your sister praying for you, and bringing your name before the throne of grace. Well, sometime read John 17.

Maybe, maybe read John 13 through 17. You'll find real encouragement for life between the two comings of Christ in this age that you're living in. But, read John 17, and listen to Jesus praying for you.

You get to, you get to listen in, eavesdrop on Jesus praying for his disciples. And you are one of his disciples, if you have faith in Christ. And so, read John 17. But even there, as he's praying, he indicates this, that he's going away, and they're staying here.

[13 : 36] Verse 11 of chapter 17. And I'm no longer in the world, but they are in the world. And I am coming to you, Holy Father. Keep them in your name. See, Jesus, he talks like he's, it's already happened.

It hasn't quite yet. I'm no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Keep them in your name. Verse 15. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

So they're staying. Jesus is going, but they're staying. That's what he's getting them ready for. So, you read John 13 through 17, and, and you get that idea. I just touched on some of the places you see it.

Read the rest of it to see what he's teaching them. But again, back to chapter 13 now. He's preparing them. And it begins with washing their feet.

On this evening, he prays for them. He equips them for life in the world. He, he talks about the, sending the giving of the Holy Spirit, all realities that help us to live in this world.

[14 : 42] It is not ultimately our home. And, and I, I skipped over this, but he says in chapter 16 in verse one, I've said all these things to keep you from falling away. Jesus goal for you, as you walk through this world with him, is that you not fall away.

And he gives you everything that you need. To make it through this world. With all of the attacks, with everything, all, all of the difficulty, all of the suffering, all of the pain, all the, all of the sorrow.

He's given you everything that you need to not fall away. And again, I keep saying it. Let's, let's, dive in now to chapter 13. It begins with washing their feet.

What does that have to do with us navigating this world? Well, he is not physically present with us. Well, verse one, Jesus knows his hour had come, come from God.

And it's going back to him. Verse three, Jesus knows Judas is about to betray him. He knows his time on earth is short. He knows verse three, that the father has given all things into his hands. The plans of God are going to be accomplished.

[15 : 45] It won't be easy. There's going to be intent. Intense anguish for Jesus in between now and his return to the father. This is the night he's betrayed. He dies the next day. Intense anguish.

But the outcome is not in doubt. He came for this hour and all would be accomplished according to God's plan. Knowing all of that, Jesus washes their feet.

And I think the washing of his feet indicates at least three things or three things that we're going to focus on tonight. It's an act of love. It's an act of love. So it's an expression of love. It's an expression of the forgiveness of sins, the picture of the forgiveness of sins.

And then this is an expression of humble service. And so let's think about each of those in turn. The washing of their feet is an act of love, as in, as the, a symbol of the forgiveness of their sins, in an act of humble service.

First, love. You see that in verse one. He loved his own in the world. And as the ESV translates it, he loved them to the end. He loved his own who were in the world.

[16 : 53] And just in that, I think we see his love. These are not just some miscellaneous disciples that he kind of had to have to be able to get some stuff done in the world once he's gone. Like, ah, like, I don't really like you guys, but I need you.

And so, no, they're his own. They're, they're his. They're the sheep of his pasture. The father has, has given them to the son and he's about to purchase them with his own blood. They're his own.

His disciples. And he loved them. And he doesn't love them with a shallow or temporary love. It was a deep love. It was abiding love.

It wasn't a fickle love that would abandon them when the going got tough. It was not love that depended on their love or their faithfulness. It didn't depend on their humility or service. Quite the contrary.

It was love despite their unfaithfulness and their fear and their pride and their selflessness. Selfishness. It was love in the face of all of those things.

[17 : 53] He loved them completely. And he loved them right to the end. His love didn't stop short of the cross and decide to preserve himself. His love didn't abandon them. When they abandoned him, he loved them to the end.

And even once in glory, his love continues in the giving of the Holy Spirit. And his right now, right now, present intercession for his disciples, he loved them to the end.

He loved them to the end. To the uttermost, brothers and sisters, if Jesus sets his love on us, we are loved with a love that cannot, that will not fail. That in itself should be comforting to us.

Sweet comforting to those who have not been loved well in this world. Maybe you haven't been loved well. Maybe your parents didn't love you. As parents are supposed to love their children. Maybe you have a spouse that's not loved you as you ought.

Or some other family member. Maybe you have. But in Jesus, you have one who loves you perfectly and will not, will never, cannot falter in that love.

[18 : 53] Amen. He loves you right now as you're sitting there. As you're thinking about the sin that you're struggling with. As you're thinking about the overwhelming weight that you're bearing and not sure, hey, Jesus loves you right where you sinned.

So what exactly did he do in love? Look at verses 4 and 5 again. He rose from supper, laid aside his outer garments, and taking 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.

Disciples likely would have been reclining at a low table, perhaps propped up on one elbow with one hand free to eat, and their feet stretching away behind the table, sort of like spokes of a tire radiating out from the hub of that tire.

Something like that. Maybe not a circular table, maybe a rectangle one, but head at the table, feet away from the table, reclining on an elbow and having a hand free to eat.

Something like that is what you might picture. And by the time of the supper, the evening meal, if they had been outside previously, walking outside with their sandals on, their feet would have been dusty and dirty, and a host would provide what was needed for feet to be washed.

[20 : 10] The disciples go and prepare the upper room beforehand and perhaps it seems, was part of that preparation, that there would be a wash basin, a pitcher with water in it, and a towel for the washing of feet.

And that washing of feet was to be the work of a servant, typically the lowliest of servants. The host would provide what's needed for feet to be washed.

The servant would do the washing of feet. But here, with only Jesus and the twelve present, it hadn't been done. There sat the wash basin and the towel and the pitcher of water.

Nobody did anything with them. They just sat there. Except Jesus. He's going to show these men how he loves them and how they ought to love one another.

So, he takes off his garments that would interfere with that work, wraps that linen cloth or towel around him, pours water into the basin, and proceeds to take the role of a servant.

[21 : 20] And he washed their dirty, dry, dusty feet. Now, I've got five boys that live in my house.

And when they come home, if they take their shoes off, particularly some of them, you know it. And you know what I mean?

You don't like to smell stinky feet, do you? I don't. Do kids ever kick off their shoes in the car? And I'm just like, what's that? Oh, put those on! Feet stink.

They sweat. It's gross. This is not, listen, this is not some sanitized, neat little ceremonial foot washing ceremony. That's not what's going on.

Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, gets down. They're on the floor. So he gets down, maybe on his hands and knees, maybe sitting, and with the water, probably his hands, washes their feet.

[22 : 27] Dries them with the tablets wrapped around them for that purpose. Washing the dirty, smelly feet of men who should be washing his feet. And at least in hindsight, what an encouragement this must have been to the disciples.

It caused probably some guilt in the moment. Oh, he should not be washing my feet. And some confusion as we want to see in a moment. But Jesus seizes an opportunity to show them love by serving in a very practical way, doing something that was needed that no one else had made a move to do.

Jesus may be on his way out of the world, back to the Father, but it doesn't indicate a lack of love. No, he loves them deeply. He's going to love them all the way to the cross and to the grave. And then from glory watching over them all the way to the home he's preparing for them.

And this humble act of service shows his departure. He's not being cruel. He's not like, Jesus, that's mean to leave us. No, he's like, I love you. He's not just abandoning them as he leaves and returns to the Father.

On the contrary, this foot washing shows his love. Now, this is just part of the picture. It signifies something greater, which we want to get to in a moment. The forgiveness of sins. And this is not the only thing he's going to do this last evening together.

[23 : 40] We can't cover all of chapters 13 through 17 tonight, but see more of his love expressed in various ways. Go meditate on that. Read John 13 through 17 and see the different ways he expresses his love and what he teaches them.

And then as he goes to the cross, the ultimate act of love for his disciples. But it starts here with this expression of love washing their feet. Now, and so as we walk through this world, we must remember, no matter what happens, no matter how hard it gets, no matter how hard it gets, we are loved.

Loved by God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, think with me about the washing of feet as a picture of spiritual cleansing, the forgiveness of sins.

When Jesus gets to Peter, Peter puts voice to what the other disciples must have been thinking, but didn't manage to say. Look at verse 6. He came to Simon Peter.

He said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? Peter, you know, Peter is, Peter thinks that he says it, right? He fits Peter's M.O.

[24 : 48] Like, this is what he does. It pops into his head and out it comes. He doesn't have much of a filter. What are you doing? Washing my feet? And in some ways, Peter's not wrong when he says that. This shouldn't be happening at a certain level.

But Jesus sees a bigger picture than Peter and the others can't yet see verse 7. Jesus answered him, what I'm doing, you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.

And later they would. John, writing years later, sees it. With the rest of them, eventually, likely after Jesus had died and risen. But that time hasn't come yet. And so Peter is insistent. Now, if what Peter says in verse 6 is understandable, Lord, do you wash my feet?

Like, I get that. Verse 8 is way, way, way out of bounds. Lord. Lord.

Or, that's, sorry, that was verse 9. Peter said to him, verse 8, you shall never wash my feet. He's just directly contradicted Jesus.

[25 : 56] Jesus is there to wash his feet. He says, you don't understand now, you will one day. And Peter essentially says, listen, I don't care what I eventually understand about what's going on. You're never going to wash my feet.

Not how you want to talk to God. Do we sometimes, though? Maybe not quite in so many words, but, Lord, I am 99.999% sure that you got this wrong.

Like, there is no way that what is happening to me could, could ever be good. It could ever be form, like it could ever be right. We might not verbalize it as boldly as Peter did, or as foolishly as he did, but, you ever thought, you've been pretty sure that God got it wrong?

Peter's sure. Jesus got it wrong. He's just ignored Jesus. John Calvin has a really helpful comment there about reminding us to just, just obey Jesus.

Don't understand, just obey. Just do what he says. Don't, don't do it, Peter. But in Jesus' answer to Peter's folly, we see there's more than just foot washing going on.

[27 : 09] So look at verse 8. Peter said to him, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I do not wash your feet, you have no share with me. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but my, also my, my hands and my head.

Peter's like a, like, I don't know, like a yo-yo, like a slingshot. All over the place. Lord, oh, have a shower. Whole thing. Oh, blow your roll now.

Verse 10, 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. And when he says you are clean, there, it's, it's you plural.

You all are clean. Y'all. It's the, it's the you plural. In English, you don't get, unless you live in the South, you don't get a you plural, but this is it. There's more than one. You all, you all are clean, but not all of you.

And he's talking about Judas. Verse 11, for he knew who was to betray him. That was why he said, not all of you are clean. I can't answer all of your questions about these verses.

[28 : 13] They're, they're intriguing. They're hard to understand in some ways, but since Jesus says there's no part or portion for Peter in him without the foot washing, the washing must be pointing to something greater.

And that's confirmed as Jesus describes all these disciples, you all as clean with the exception of the one who was to betray him. 11 disciples are clean, but not Judas the betrayal. So it seems that Jesus is using a picture of physical cleansing to the point, to the greater reality of spiritual cleansing.

And so Jesus, I think humility and cleansing their feet here anticipates the humiliation that he will endure at the cross, where he cleanses them of their sin and guilt and shame.

Here in humility, he cleanses their feet at the cross in humility. He's going to cleanse them from their sin. Peter still got his impulsive problem, but this time his response is more admirable than the previous one.

Wash all of me. Verse nine. For one already cleansed, that's not necessary. Not totally certain what that means, whether it's talking about something like justification and sanctification. If you have been washed, you've been justified, then you just need the daily repentance, the daily returning to Christ, the daily cleansing of your feet.

[29 : 26] As you get dirty again, wash, you need to be washed again, but not all of you. You've been justified. So you don't need to be that to happen again. You've got that. It may mean something like that, or Jesus might just be pointing to foot washing as a picture of that complete salvation cleansing.

That's already happened for you. And this is just a picture of it. You don't need a whole bath. I'm just giving you a reminder. You're clean. Maybe some other explanation, but the big picture is clear.

We need cleansing from sin. It comes through the work of Jesus, and Judas didn't have it. And as Jesus makes his way around the table, he's giving them each a tangible reminder of the filthiness of sin and the work of the Savior to cleanse them from sin.

Now, if you're skeptical about a connection between this humble service of Christ and the humble sacrifice of the cross, maybe this will help. Philippians 2, 5-8. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 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, which is exactly what he's doing here at this table. 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.

[30 : 57] And so, with what Jesus says about cleansing here, not all of them being clean, not Judas, this humble cleaning of their feet as a servant, I think, anticipates the cleansing of their souls that he will accomplish in humiliation at his death, even death on a cross.

Humble work of a servant, clean feet. Humble work of a servant, dying for sinners like us. Which is why Judas is excluded.

Verses 10 and 11. Jesus doesn't skip him in the foot washing, it doesn't seem. He's willing to show love and service to a traitor. Even to a traitor. But it didn't hold the spiritual significance for Judas that it did for the others, because he wasn't a true believer.

He hadn't been cleansed from his sin. And let me pause and ask you tonight, what about me? Have you been cleansed from your sin?

If Jesus were here tonight and said, you all are clean, but not all of them. Would you be part of the, you all are clean, or the, not all of them?

[32 : 07] Jesus is still in the business of forgiving sins. That's the good news.

If you know tonight, you're in the not all of you category. Jesus is still in the business of forgiving sins. And you can come to him, and he will save you. He will cleanse you from your sin.

He's not going to wash your feet, because he's not bodily present with you anymore. But he will cleanse you, and make you his own. Sweet reminder that we have, that we need in these days.

Jesus loves his own, and he humbled himself that they might be clean. You walk through this world full of corruption, full of filth. You, by God's grace, have been cleansed, been forgiven of your sins, and set apart from this world.

And so while what you see in this world, that grieves you, while your own sin in your heart, that remains, and the sins that you commit, still do battle with those sins, you know that you're forgiven.

[33 : 14] You've been cleansed. Through the work of Jesus. That's what I need to remember in these days. But lastly, the washing of feet is an expression of humble service. So it's an expression of love. It's an expression of forgiveness of sins.

And then Jesus has some more to say. It's an expression of humble service. He's got a question that applies this humble service to them, those disciples there, and to us in a way that will help them and us while we wait for his return.

Look at 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 to you? Maybe they were starting to understand his point about forgiveness and spiritual cleansing because of what he said, but Jesus has more to say.

These disciples, and different commentators point this out, may well have been willing to wash Jesus' feet, but not each other's. Like if Jesus had been there and not the others, and there's a washbasin town, he's got dirty feet, like, I'll wash Jesus' feet, but, huh, Peter's?

No. No. You want me to wash James? Matthew? Matthew? No. That's what it looks like is going on here.

[34 : 25] Listen to what Luke records that night. Luke 22. This is verse 24 through 27. A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

Now, if you're having an argument about who's the greatest, are you going to go grab the wash station and towel and wash your fellow disciples' feet? Nope. And they didn't. He said to them, this is still Luke 22, the kings of the Gentiles exercised lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you.

Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves. For who is greater? The one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table?

But I am among you as the one who serves. And you can almost picture Jesus going from that right into washing their feet. Now, I don't know where that fell on that evening and what came first.

Man, that's relevant. You put Luke 22, 24 to 27 together with John 13 and you get a bigger picture of what's going on. You've got proud disciples waiting for other people to serve them instead of getting down and doing the serving.

[35 : 39] Disciples debating which is the greatest aren't going to be tripping over themselves to grab that pitcher, pour the water out, and wash feet. But Jesus, the one who's rightly, verse 13, called teacher and lured by them, Jesus who is actually in a superior position to them, he's God, in love and humility washes their feet.

And as their teacher, he's going to make sure that they learn from it. He is their teacher. So look at what he says in verses 14 and 15. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I've given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. As I have done, so you should do.

You should wash one another's feet. You should humble yourself. You should serve one another. The marks of true faith and followers of Christ are not looking for other people to serve you.

That's not a mark of faith in Christ. It's not thinking that you're better than everyone else. That's not a mark of faith in Christ. It's not assuming that someone else will do the menial task. It's humbly taking the lower place.

[36 : 50] Whether anyone will ever know it or not. Jesus did this as an example for the disciples to follow. He says it explicitly in verse 15.

I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. And it wasn't just for them. It's an example for us. Are you and I willing to humbly serve to take the lower place?

And please don't try to convince yourself that you're somehow exempt from this. I know that's like other disciples. I don't need to wash any feet. No, no. Verse 16.

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. We're servants of our Lord Jesus. He sends us, not the other way around.

If washing feet wasn't beneath him, it certainly can't be beneath us. I promise that we are not better than Jesus. And so this is for every one of his disciples, including me.

[38 : 01] But how often do we act like we are better? How often are we unwilling to do the dirty task to serve in love? How often does our pride creep in? And we wouldn't say it, but we're really sure we're actually better than those people and serving them would make us cringe a little bit and shrink away like the disciples shrank from washing each other's feet.

I think we should probably not, like some have done, turn this into a sacrament for the church, an exact practice being required to wash other people's feet in a nice sanitized little ceremonial service where we wash each other's feet.

I don't think that's what Jesus is asking us to do here. That's a possible interpretation, but we don't have the cultural element of walking dry, dusty roads and sandals, but there are plenty of other lowly tasks by which to serve.

I do believe we must humbly serve as the Savior said and showed. If you know these things, and we do, and blessed are you if you do them.

What kind of things might we think are beneath us? I hope no legitimate service is beneath you and me. I pray we're willing to visit the sick and the infirm, the shut-in, and the outcast.

[39 : 16] We should be glad to show hospitality to others, and not just those that are like us. It's easy to have people over that we know, that we get along with, and we should do that, enjoy that, but do you ever have people over that maybe you don't know as well, and you're not sure if you get along with them, and you're, hmm, I don't know, that's uncomfortable, it's harder, isn't it?

Do you ever show that kind of hospitality? Hospitality, the word, the Bible is literally love of stranger, not love of the people that you already love. Do you ever show hospitality to strangers?

Invite in people that you don't know well and serve them. Husbands, I hope that washing the dishes and doing and folding the laundry and changing diapers and vacuuming aren't somehow beneath you.

would you be willing to bathe and change an elderly loved one who can't do it for themselves anymore? Are we willing in the church to do the invisible work of cleaning the church building, scrubbing toilets, pulling weeds?

Do we just want the service opportunities where we're going to be seen and noticed? Do we demand a seat in the highest halls of power because we're so full of ourselves and self-righteous, or are we content to serve where no one will see us?

[40 : 32] Love and humility must compel us toward the latter. Brothers and sisters, this is for me. It's for all of God's children, for all of Jesus' disciples.

Humble service is what we need as we wait for the Savior Jesus to return. May we follow in the footsteps of Christ and do as He did. Now, He'll call people to have more prominent positions and put us in different places, but let's, no matter what station He puts us in, always be willing to serve.

Humble so. How does that help us in these days? This emphasis on serving one another may be exactly what we need to get our eyes off of ourselves and our miserable circumstances.

Focusing on serving others can be a wonderful antidote to fear and worry. fretting. Instead of focusing on what was me and what's going to happen and let's be looking for opportunities to be a blessing and to help others in our own home and our church and our communities.

Getting our eyes off ourselves and all our trouble and looking to find somebody else's trouble and see if we can serve them in the middle of it. And go wash their feet. That's a way to live as we walk through this world.

[41 : 47] Jesus calls us to this until he returns. While he's bodily absent we are to do his work showing his love to the people around us until he returns.

We don't need to be looking for power and influence or being connected to people who have that power and influence. Let's be looking to serve. And so as we walk through this world exiles, strangers, aliens feeling like we don't belong in many ways let's not make it our aim to be like the world or to worry about what's happening in the world but rather to be like the Savior who came to be the Savior of the world.

Now we can't save the world but we can serve and Jesus calls us to do just that as we walk through this world sacrificially, humbly as we follow him the one who's cleansed us from our sin.

This last night of Jesus with his disciples holds real hope and help for us as we wait for his return and it began with washing their feet and so may the forgiveness of our Savior comfort us and give us confidence may the love of our Savior encourage us may the humility and service of our Savior challenge us to go and do likewise to show the same in this world that so desperately needs our Savior.

Let's go shine his light by serving as he did on this night. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word and your truth.

[43 : 20] We thank you for your love for us that Jesus so clearly demonstrates. We thank you for your forgiveness of sins that you have given to unworthy sinners like us.

We thank you for the humble service of Christ that he, though he was in glory God himself that he came to earth and took the form of a servant and became obedient to the point of death humbling himself to the point of death even death on a cross humbled himself to the point of washing feet.

We pray that we would not think ourselves better than our Savior but that we would gladly receive the gift of forgiveness of sins and that we would gladly show the love and the humble service that had been shown to us that we would show them to others.

Would you equip us for this work that we are not sufficient for? Would you encourage us as we walk through this hard world reminding us that we belong to the Savior and may our hope be in him. We pray in his name.

Amen. Amen.