

“Jesus the Sovereign, Savior, and Servant”

JOHN 13:1-17

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INTRODUCTION

We marvel at the Cross, and we should! Consider the moment that life and death met in the person of Jesus...when God became man to die for sinful men. Peter tells us that angels desired to understand the great mystery of God becoming man (1 Peter 1:12); God would become human to save sinners. The Scriptures teach that this was the most important and surprising series of events in the history of the world.

What we have before us now, what happened in a small Jewish home the night Jesus was betrayed, is the most astonishing, unbelievable thing to ever happen in the history of the world.

That God would come as a man, was a profound mystery that literally shook the creation. But that God would come as he came, to do what we will see Him do in this text, this defies comfortable belief. If you can glibly consider our text today and be unchallenged, if you can consider this truth comfortably, then you do not understand the revelation of Christ.

But if you accept this truth that turns the whole world upside down, *that God Almighty came as a servant*, although you will be shaken to your core, you will be blessed and established for eternity

Receive Jesus' gift of daily service by trusting him, so you may serve as He served, and be blessed!

Vs 1-3 What Did Jesus Understand On The Night He Was Betrayed?

A sacrifice is only as meaningful as the one making it, service is more meaningful when done by a great person. So, who is this sacrificing servant in our text? We must first know who Jesus is!

Vs. 1-3 Jesus had complete, perfect knowledge of four very important things: 1. that it was his time to leave the World through his death, 2. that God had given him all things, 3. that he came from God, and 4. would go back to God.

How comforting it would seem, to have perfect and complete knowledge of the course of your life! What would someone give to know these things?

Have no doubt in your mind that Jesus was full of might and wisdom as the fullness of God in the form of a man!

Vs 4-5 What Did Jesus Do With This Knowledge?

Vs. 4-5 Jesus got up, took off his outer garments, took a towel, and dressed himself as a servant

John writes what happens next just like someone who was there! He switches from present to past tense back and forth like he saw it with his own eyes, like he had told what happened that night over and over.

...at the supper Jesus gets up, removes his garment, then he took a towel and wrapped himself, he pours water into a basin, and then he began to wash the disciple's feet!

This was the work of a slave or at least a servant. But the disciples are never mentioned washing Jesus' feet. In fact the only other time someone's feet are washed in the Gospel is the woman in Luke 7 who was so full of grief and love that she washed Jesus feet with her own tears...and Jesus said "I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

The meaning of what Jesus did we see below. But at this point in the narrative, it is sufficient to worship in awe and wonder at the Lord of all creation who washes the feet of sinners.

Marvel at this Jesus who is sovereign and servant!

Vs 6-11 How Did Jesus' Disciples React To This Astonishing Act Of Love

Vs. 6 Peter's question is one of complete astonishment. His "you" and "my" are very emphatic; "*you are going to wash my feet?*".

Vs. 8-9 Peter's next response is even stronger saying "no, no, you will never wash my feet". The way he says it is like saying "never ever, or never in a million years!" But Jesus answered him, if I do not wash your feet, we have nothing in common (no part in me).

You cannot have "some" Jesus in your life. You cannot receive his gift of salvation (complete washing) unless you also receive his gift of daily cleansing (foot washing). The picture is of baptism as complete salvation, and foot washing as the daily return to the Lord.

Vs. 10 There are two cleansings in the Christian life, the once-and-for-all "bath" of salvation and the daily washing of our feet by the Lord. The fact that Jesus refuses Peter another "complete cleansing" illustrates that one can never be "resaved", a person who has been saved is saved for all time.

Vs. 11 Peter was astonished, ignorant, and even a little rebellious, but mark this: he trusted Jesus, and so received his loving service by faith.

Like Peter, you must receive God's gifts in wholehearted trust! The same awesome love that saves a Christian is working every day of your life to cleanse us.

Vs. 11 Chapter 13 focuses on two of the disciples who received Jesus' act of love. Peter who loved the Lord, and Judas who betrayed Him. The narrative does not tell us anything of what Judas said, certainly he did not protest, he received the service of Christ silently, outwardly showing belief, and it only added to his damnation because there was no faith.

When we observed the Lord's supper today, we were all either Peter or Judas. We all accepted the love of Christ with sincere (but imperfect) faith, or with just an outward show. Which are you today?

“1 Cor 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”

Today the Word of God challenges us to receive the love and service of Christ, but you must see how both Peter and Judas received this same gift. Both heard Jesus and ministered with him, both shared his table even as we have remembered today, both had their feet washed by the Lord, but only one of them is with Jesus in paradise today! The difference between hell and heaven is that Peter received the loving service of Christ by faith, trusting him.

You must receive Jesus' personal cleansing of sins by sincerely trusting him, not just going through motions! By just going through the motions you heap damnation on yourself like Judas.

Vs 12-16 How Should We Respond To Jesus Astonishing Act Of Love?

Vs 12-13 What follows applies to anyone who calls Jesus Master (teacher) and Lord (authority).

Vs 15 Jesus states that he has done this as an example. The idea is a "pattern of life" or a way of living. "Heb 4:11 ¶ Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man falls after the same **example** of unbelief."

This helps us to understand that his teaching is not that we should specifically wash each others feet, but much more than this. Our way of life should be characterized by foot washing like service.

Vs 15 the verb here “should” is a moral obligation, legal debt, or duty; the idea is something you must pay!

Jesus is not just saying that you "should" wash each others feet, or that it's the "Christian" thing to do. Jesus says that if you call Jesus Lord you are morally required to serve others in even the humblest ways. To call Jesus your teacher and refuse to humbly serve others, is like saying you are a parent and refusing to feed your kids. Or saying that you own a house and refusing to pay the mortgage.

Follow Jesus' pattern of life by serving each other with humility!

Matt 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Vs 17 What Will Happen If We Know These Things And Do These Things?

Jesus was called the “man of sorrows” and he knew pain like no one that ever walked the earth. But just as the power of God turns the dead into the living, sorrow is turned into wisdom and joy. Not only are we obligated to serve as Jesus did, but we are blessed if we do.

“know” - we have received the commandment, and the perfect example, even Jesus himself! Just like Peter, just like Judas. Judas knew as well. But Judas chose to go his own way.

“blessed” - this is the same word that is used in “sermon on the mount” and it means “happy”.

This is not just a heavenly promise that we will be happy someday in the future if we live for others. This is a very present escape from the trap of selfishness. If we give our lives over to Christ and His service then we will have joy in heaven, but also an abiding, resilient happiness on earth.

Selfish people, people who put their own happiness first, are so often the most miserable. Again, consider Judas and Peter, within 12 hours of this Judas killed himself in a fit of misery, and that was only the beginnings of his sorrow.

You know the truth, if you claim Christ, you are called to serve as he did, do this and be blessed!

CONCLUSION

The same God that worked in you the day you were saved, works in you every day offering cleansing of sins and empowerment for service. You must come to him to receive these daily gifts of life. But mark this: the two gifts, salvation and service, go together. The name "Jesus" has no place on your lips, if you are not willing to make yourself a servant as He is.

Receive His love! Follow His example! And know that you will be blessed now and for eternity.

Receive Jesus' gift of daily service by trusting him, so you may serve as He served, and be blessed!