

John 13vs1-30

The need to be washed...

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Introduction

This is the introduction to the “Upper Room Discourse” (in which Jesus gives his disciples specific instructions before the cross), which runs from ch 13 to ch 17... so what does the rest of the gospel of John look like?

ch 11 The Resurrection

ch 12 The Cross

chs 13-17 The Upper Room Discourse

chs 18-19 The Cross

ch 20 The Resurrection

If chs 11-12 showed us that Life comes through Jesus’ death... then chs 13-17 explain how Jesus’ death and resurrection will impact life NOW...

We will see that for the Christian, living life right now is shaped by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Let’s start by reading ch 13 vs 1-20:

ch 13 vs 1-20: 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. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it 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 had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it round his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped round him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” ⁷ Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterwards you will understand.” ⁸ 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.” ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 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.” ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

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? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 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.

¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

What is the significance of the two time references in v1?

v 1: 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.

- **The Feast of the Passover** - the annual feast at which the Jews remembered God's rescue from not just the Egyptians but rather his judgement! Rescued - through the sacrificial death of the Passover Lamb.
- **His hour had come** – this is all part of the plan which Jesus has been speaking about since ch 2!

Why is it so shocking that Jesus washes the disciples' feet in vs 1-11?

- It is the equivalent of the President of the USA volunteering to be the loo attendant at a really bad public toilet!

So – this is certainly an example of Jesus' humility... but is it more than that?

Let's look at the facts:

- What did Jesus know (vs 1-2)?
 - v1: **his hour had come...** to go back to his Father via the cross
 - v2: the devil had told Judas **"to betray him"**
- When do the disciples understand what he was doing?

Read v 7: Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterwards you will understand."

Understand after what..? ...The Cross.

Therefore, Jesus:

- clearly knows about the cross...
- and he tells his disciples that they will only understand what the foot washing means after the cross.

So what is this act of washing really about?

- It's a picture of what Jesus will do on the cross by cleansing away our sins.

This helps us understand even better what goes on between Peter and Jesus in vs 8:

v 8: *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."*

Expressed differently: *"If I do not wash you (save you) you have no "share/future" with me."*

Why is Peter's reluctance understandable?

- Because Peter knows who Jesus is! Remember John ch6:

Ch 6 v 68: *Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."*

- He has seen :
 - Jesus walk on water!
 - Heal the sick!
 - Raise the dead!

How can the one described as being ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."***(John 1 v 1)... now wash Peter's feet?!

- But Peter hasn't yet realised what Jesus has come to do!
- NOR has Peter realised his own deep need of cleansing by God before he can have anything useful to offer to God.

The reality is... I can't serve Jesus until Jesus has first served me!

- It's NOT about what I do – it's about what Jesus has done! I must first receive a 'washing' from Jesus.
- We all start helpless – bringing NOTHING... except our sin! But Peter didn't realise this yet!
- GRACE IS A FREE GIFT!

Once Peter does begin to understand, he wants much more of such 'washing'!!

ch 13 v 9: *Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"*

Jesus extends the picture...

Read v 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."*

- Once you have come to Christ for forgiveness you have been completely washed.
- When we let him down, we don't need to be completely washed again ... as in - we don't go back to "square one" like in the childhood game of snakes and ladders!
- Our sins are washed away each day...
 - just like my feet
 - however much my feet need it
- We are declared right with Christ ONCE AND FOR ALL
- But it is necessary that we continue to confess our sin, and remain humbly dependent on Jesus and his death – day by day.

Now let's re-read vs 12-20:

ch 13 vs 12-20: 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? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 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. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

In these verses Jesus moves from talking about what he has done for us, to talking about how we should act towards each other.

We are "in service" to Jesus for all those with whom we come in contact.

So - once "washed" and "served" by Jesus - we are NOW to be in service to one another.

Let's look closely at vs 14-16, and consider: how does the logic work?

vs 14-16: *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 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."*

- No servant is greater than his master... if Jesus has humbly and lovingly washed our feet, who are we to refuse humbly and lovingly to serve others?!
- If he has sent us as messengers, who are we to think we can do anything other than model our lives on HIS?!

This passage holds out a very high ideal for Christian disciples.

- To be a disciple of Jesus is to be someone whom Jesus has served.
- To be a disciple of Jesus is to be someone who serves others.

Remember, here we see that this example of service is the service of the household slave!

It's worth pausing at this point:

- If I am someone who has already turned to follow Jesus, how might I serve others?
 - At home?
 - At work?
 - In church?

Even as Jesus speaks, he knows that not all of the 12 disciples are genuine:

vs 18-19: *"I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he."*

...and he doesn't want them to be thrown off course by Judas' betrayal.

Jesus wants us to know that as we serve others selflessly as his messengers... as people receive us and his message... they will be receiving the Father who sent Jesus. WHAT a privilege it is for us to serve Jesus!

Read v 20: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."*

Let's unpack the verse in reverse order:

- Receiving Christ equals receiving God: ***"...whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."***

- If I go out in Christ's name, I go as his ambassador: "...**whoever receives the one I send receives me...**"
- Receiving Christ's messengers and message EQUALS receiving Christ himself!

Who are the ones that Jesus says he "sends"?

- He is talking to the disciples whose feet he has washed and who he has commanded to do the same:

Read v 14: *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*

What is the relevance of this to us if we have been spiritually washed by Jesus?

- This gives us a hugely privileged position... doesn't it!?
- We have been washed by HIM!
- We are now commissioned by HIM to serve others!
- We do this by going as HIS messengers
- As we carry the message of Jesus we will selflessly serve others
- As they receive us and our message they receive not only Jesus but also God the Father!!

So, if we are Christian... let's have a go at answering that question again:

- If I'm someone who has turned to follow Jesus, how can I serve others:
 - At home?
 - At work?
 - In our wider network of friends & family?
 - In church?

Finally let's read vs 21-30:

ch 13 vs 21-30: *After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus,²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?"²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast", or that he should give something to the poor.³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.*

In vs 21-30 John wants us to be very clear that Jesus is in TOTAL control:

➤ Judas' betrayal is no surprise to Jesus –

v 21: ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”***

➤ Jesus at least wants John to know this:

Read v 26: *Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.*

It is thought that the disciple mentioned in vs 23-24 is actually John the Gospel writer:

Read vs 23-24: *One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.*

God is in charge, and what Judas does is part of his plan, but...

... Judas is still responsible, and is always held accountable for the decision he took.

So then, not every disciple will accept the work of washing that Jesus has come to do...

The contrast here is VERY bleak:

- Either we will be disciples of Jesus – served by him and “fitted” to serve others in HIS work...
- ...Or we will be like Judas - rejecting Jesus and his wonderful work.

The picture that John paints is very bleak:

Read v 30: *So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.*

Into the darkness... away from THE light!

What next..?

Then there were 11... what's going to happen to them?

John 13 vs 1-30

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