

Summary Sheet for John 13vs1-30

...to accompany Notes 24

GOAL of this 1-2-1 study

Accept personally Jesus' essential cleansing through his death and serve others in the same manner

Context – how does this passage fit in?

Chs 13-17 (known as 'the Upper Room Discourse') are set on the eve of Jesus' death. This section is much more personal than previous settings, as Jesus now teaches believers/disciples – his 'own' – in private rather than his public words to the unbelieving world in general. Chs 13-17 show us much more of what it means in practice for Jesus' disciples to follow him, God's King who dies to bring life.

As people conspire to kill Jesus, he wants his disciples to be in no doubt that he is in complete control of his death (13vs18-19, 21-30). It is only when Judas, the traitor, leaves the room that Jesus will begin to make more things plain to his true followers. Before he sets out the main bulk of his teaching to his disciples, Jesus first makes clear in ch 13vs1-30 that if his disciples want to serve him, they must first let Jesus serve them personally by washing them clean through his death. Only then are they called to serve other believers in the same humble and generous way that Jesus has served them...

Impact on us

Will we accept that we personally need to be washed clean by Jesus before we can be of any use to him?

Or will we resent this idea that Jesus must humbly serve us and persist in offering him our futile and 'dirty' offering...

Once we have been declared clean/forgiven by Jesus, we are to pour our lives into serving other believers with the same attitude that Jesus served us – how ready and proactive are we in doing this? Or do we prefer to only relate to others in a way that suits us..?

How John writes to make his point

As events now accelerate towards Jesus' death, John makes it very clear that Jesus is still the one in control. In ch 13vs1-3, John emphasises the Passover setting (when the entire Jewish nation was remembering God's rescue of his people through a sacrificial lamb) and that Jesus has his forthcoming death in mind, but also the victories that will follow. It is with these points clearly in view that Jesus then carries out the act of foot-washing for his disciples. By setting the scene so explicitly, John wants us to know that this action isn't just a kind act, but rather one of deep significance. Jesus explains that the disciples will only understand the full meaning 'afterwards' – ie after his death.

The foot-washing is used by Jesus in two ways – it first helps to explain what his death achieves (serving people by washing them clean from their sin – hence the vital importance of being willing to be washed by Jesus, v8). But it also sets an example for how Jesus' disciples are to serve one another (v14-15) – in the same humble, self-sacrificial and generous nature of the cross, that is completely contrary to how the unbelieving world treats people.

Structure

13:1-20 Jesus washes his disciples' feet – what Jesus' death means personally for those who follow him

1-11: Being 'washed' clean by Jesus is essential if you want to follow him

12-20: Those who have been 'washed'/served by Jesus are to serve other believers in the same manner

13:21-30 Jesus is in control of his death – he clearly identifies his betrayer and sends him on his way in full view of his disciples

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- *'You will be clean from all your sins'*

The idea of being 'clean' is often found in the OT as a picture of being forgiven (eg Leviticus 16v30, Psalm 51v7, Ezekiel 36v25, etc)

Some questions to help guide someone else through ch 13vs1-30-

Opener: What things can cause us to forget/doubt our personal need for Jesus' death?

Considering the text1: According to v1-3, what event is at the forefront of Jesus' mind? How do these verses both help us feel the shock of Jesus' washing people's dirty feet, and help us understand what the action really symbolises?

Considering the text2: What is it about Jesus' actions that cause Peter to question them so strongly in v6-8? How might we be tempted to join with Peter in saying v8 to Jesus?

Considering the text3: How does Jesus develop the picture in v10? What is the point he is making to Peter?

Considering the text4: What do v12-17 teach us about the behaviour, privilege, attitude and motivations of a genuine disciple of Jesus?

Considering the text5: How and why does this passage and particularly v18-30 help us have confidence that Jesus is in control of his death?

Some to keep chewing on: What did/would it take to persuade you that you require the washing work of the Cross? If we're someone who has turned to follow Jesus and therefore been washed by him, how can we serve other Christians at home, at work, church, etc?

How guilty was Judas?

- John is clear that Judas was responsible for his decision to betray Jesus. In ch12v4-6, John mentions that Judas' heart was already opposed to Jesus' teaching as he used to steal from the group's money bag. His betrayal of Jesus also stemmed from a heart that did not believe who Jesus really was.
- However, Judas' actions were also part of the devil's schemes against God's King (13vs2, 27).
- John is equally clear that God was also sovereign over – in control and with full prior knowledge of – Judas' actions. Jesus knew all about Judas' intentions (13v18-19, 21-30), and the Old Testament had prophesied this very event (13v18).

Judas was held fully accountable by God for his decision to betray God's King. But this decision, intended for evil by sinful man and the devil, was instead overruled by God to work towards the salvation of many and the glory of his King.