

8.12.18 ~ **John 13:1-17**,
Exemplifying the Love of Christ.

As we completed chapter 12, the last time we were together, it was made very clear that the True Children of God are not those who merely descended from the Twelve Tribes of Israel, under the Law and according to the covenants, ceremonies and sacrifices; but the True Children of God are those who belong to Him through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Galatians 3:26-29, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

Jesus had repeatedly, for over three years, provided demonstrable proof that He was indeed God's Son, the Messiah, both Savior and Lord; yet, the majority of Israel would not believe in Him.

As we begin chapter 13, Jesus' public ministry to Israel has ended; after pouring His heart out that they should believe in Him (**John 12:36**), "He went away and hid Himself from them."

Jesus turns His attention to the Twelve, reassuring them of the deep and eternal love that He has for them over the long hours of the evening before His crucifixion.

Read John 13:1... Passover had been celebrated for 1500 years, remembering how God freed Israel from bondage in Egypt, when the Death Angel killed the first born males in all households where the blood of a lamb was not on the doorposts.

Passover was now to commemorate new covenant, through the shed blood of God's Lamb, Jesus Christ, upon the Cross (see **1Corinthians 11:23-26**).

Back to **John 13:1**, Jesus, "knowing that His hour had come," was looking toward His return to the Father, and yet, John writes, "[Jesus] having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

The Bible tells us (cf. **John 3:16**) that God loves the lost sinners of the world, but He loves His own with a love that (**Ephesians 3:19**) "surpasses knowledge."

Christ's love is sacrificial, redemptive, and it can never be taken away from us (**Romans 8:35, 38-39**). "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Not even through Jesus' own death can God's love be removed from those who belong to Him; but instead, it is made more effectual through Christ's death.

Read John 13:2... The devil had already gotten a foothold in the unbelieving heart of Judas, who would be used to betray the Lord.

About two months ago, when we were studying **John 12**, we read (**verse 4**) John's perspective on Judas, that Judas, "was intending to betray Jesus," and also that Judas (**verse 6**) was a thief.

God used a man who was deceitful to help carry out the plot to kill God's Son. **Read John 13:3-11...** This is really an important teaching by Jesus, and the timing heightens its meaning. Jesus is getting ready to go to the Cross, and then after 40 days to go back to the Father in heaven.

Jesus is clearly God's Son (**John 1:1-3, 14, 18**), who came from heaven to show us the Father. He is the Creator, Sustainer, Ruler and Judge of the universe, and here we find Him performing one of the most menial tasks, the task of a slave, washing another person's feet (It is interesting that Jewish slaves were not required to perform this service, only Gentile slaves).

Think about it, the custom for this Passover meal was to lounge on the floor around a low table, meaning your feet might be near or up against someone else, and their's up against you, for what was a very long meal

Walking on the dirt roads and streets in sandals would definitely leave your feet dirty.

It would appear that there was no servant to wash their feet, so it would have been proper for one of the Twelve to offer to do so, but that wasn't happening; and so Jesus uses this opportunity to impress upon them a lesson in humility; that they ought to love each other as Jesus is exemplifying His love for them by serving them, even though He is their master and teacher.

The Lord of the universe (**verses 4-5**) gets up from the meal, takes off his outer garment, places a towel around Himself, pours some water into a container, then kneels down and begins to wash the feet of each of them.

Peter is really taken back (**verses 6-8**), for to have someone who is superior (The Lord) wash the feet of one who is inferior (the Disciples), was not acceptable in either the Jewish or Roman culture.

The dull mindedness of Peter and the rest of the Twelve is exposed when Jesus basically says, "you won't understand what I am doing until after I am gone."

Peter doesn't get it (**John 13:8**), "Never shall you wash my feet." The Lord is so patient with him here, instead of rebuking him harshly, Jesus says, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

Peter would later understand the Lord's teaching, as is noted in his first letter, written about AD 60:

1Peter 2:24, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

1Peter 3:18, For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit"

The Twelve did not understand Jesus' mission during this first advent; He did not come as a conquering king, but instead, as a humble servant.

Peter, always impetuous and impulsive, goes from, "don't you dare wash me" (**verse 8**), to, "don't only wash my feet, but my hands and my head also" (**verse 9**). But Jesus wasn't speaking of a physical washing [washing is a common biblical metaphor for spiritual cleansing], Jesus was speaking of being acceptable to God, the righteousness that is imputed to true believers.

Jesus says **John 13:10**, salvation makes them [and us] eternally acceptable to God, "you are clean," i.e., you are saved, but you must continue with daily cleansing; just like your feet get dirty and need to be washed but the rest of you is already clean if you have bathed.

Through obedience to God's Word we remain cleansed from the daily effects of sin in our life; we have been granted forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ, but we must be daily "cleansed," not for salvation, but so that we will honor and properly represent the Lord.

1Corinthians 6:11, "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

1Peter 3:21, "not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

We are completely clean spiritually at the moment of genuine salvation, for Christ's atoning death provides forgiveness and cleansing from all our sins.

2Corinthians 5:21, "[God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1John 1:7, "the blood of Jesus [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin."

Notice at the end of **verse 10** Jesus says, "but not all of you [are clean], **verse 11** makes it clear He is speaking of Judas, "the one who was betraying Him." Remember, Jesus chose Judas, knowing that he would betray Him (cf. **John 6:70**), "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

In **Acts 2:23**, Peter prophetically said to the Jews, "this Man [Jesus], delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless [*unbelieving*] men and put Him to death."

Read John 13:12-17... Jesus washed the disciples feet (including Judas), then took His garments and reclined at the table with the Twelve.

Jesus will be taken from them in the early morning hours, He is teaching them the importance of humble, loving service; if He, the Lord, is willing to serve as a lowly slave, as illustrated by washing their feet, shouldn't they follow His example by serving others?

Mark 10:43-45, "whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Look again **John 13:15**, "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." Jesus didn't say "do what I did to you," but instead "as I did to you."

This is not about making foot washing an ordinance for the church, like baptism and the Lord's Supper, in fact it only appears once in Scripture, here, where it is used by Jesus, to demonstrate true loving humility.

In Luke's narrative, after Jesus washes the feet of the Twelve and offers the bread and the cup, He says (**Luke 22:27**), "who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves."

Usually a servant tends to those reclining around the table; Jesus Himself (the Lord of Glory) is one of those reclining at the table, and yet, He is the one who actually served as a slave, by washing the feet of the Twelve.

Look at **John 13:16** again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him." No servant would dare to consider any task to be too menial or lowly for him to do, if indeed his own master or lord has performed this same task.

Philippians 2:5-8, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus concludes His personal and intimate lesson on humility with the words of **John 13:17**, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." Do you see? Blessing flows out of obedience, out of doing what pleases God, obedience doesn't flow out of blessing.

The Psalmist writes (**Psalms 119:1**), "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord." To walk in the law of the Lord or to live in obedience to God's Word, brings blessing. In **Luke 11:28** Jesus said, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe [do or practice] it."

In Mark 3, Jesus is told by the crowd that His mother and brothers are outside looking for Him, Jesus' responds (**Mark 3:33**), "Who are My mother and My brothers?" Then looking around at the crowd Jesus said (**Mark 3:35**), "whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

What is the will of God?

Mark 12:30-31, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength' [and] 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

1John 2:6, "the one who says he abides in Him [has life from God through Jesus Christ] ought himself to walk in the same manner as He [Jesus] walked," Jesus showed God's love to us, if we truly believe in Him, we are to show God's love to others (**John 13:35**), "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."