

JESUS, THE LOVING SERVANT

John chapter 13

**In Preparation for the Cross Jesus
washes the disciples' feet.**

- **In the first twelve chapters of John's Gospel, Christ is seen as light, revealing the Father, and exposing men (John 1:7; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5).**
- **There is, however, a rather dramatic shift in John's vocabulary beginning in chapter 13, which underscores the importance of "love" in chapters 13-17.**
- **But now we behold Him as love with "his own", (cf. John 13:34; 14:12; 15:9; 17:26 , etc.).**
- **Love is a very significant term from here on in John's Gospel**
- **Since divine love cannot allow that which is unclean, the holy love of Christ began by symbolically removing defilement from the feet of His disciples!**
- **We delight in contemplating the love which caused Him to lay down His life for us, but let us never lose sight of the present activities of it....as displayed here.**

- The section of John , starting in chapter 13, begins with the statement, ‘Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;’ (13:1).
- It ends in chapter 17 with Jesus praying, ‘that the love wherewith thou has loved me may be in them, and I in them’ (17:26).
- He begins and ends His ministry at the Last Supper with His love for “His own.”
- And down through the five chapters (13-17) we have the marvelous revelation of His love, and His concern for “His own”.
- It is very obvious that in **these five chapters**, that John wishes to emphasize the love our Lord has for **“His own.”** The Upper room discourse begins and ends with His love for His own.

- **As we study this section of John, and this chapter, there is a need to stress JESUS' LOVE throughout.**
- **The emphasis in this chapter is not on the washing of the disciples feet per se, but to see that this act, was a pattern of self-denying love for His disciples and for us.**
- **When we study, WE MUST KEEP THE MAIN THING, THE MAIN THING. (McGee)**
- **JESUS LOVE AND HUMILITY IS THE MAIN THING in this chapter!**
- **WHAT A CHAPTER!**

WHAT A SUPPER! v 1

**Now before the feast of the
passover,“**

- **"Now before the feast of the passover,"**
- **The feast of the passover was observed as a memorial of the day when the blood of an innocent, blemish free lamb was spilt, to spare a household from death's visit to their home when God passed over the houses of the children of Israel when He killed the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt (Exodus 12) .**
- **This particular passover supper, occurred on the eve before the grand event that the Passover symbolized and predicted . The one death which gave efficacy to all previous Passover deaths was about to happen.**
- **Our Lord was about to face the agony of crucifixion and the terror of standing in the place of guilty sinners before the righteous wrath of God the Father. He was about to die as the true Lamb for the sins of the world (John 1:29; 1Peter 1:18-19), the event which the original passover recorded in Exodus 12 pointed.**
- **At this particular passover supper, our Lord engaged in intensive and intimate teaching to "His own", and towards the end of the supper He instituted the Lord's Supper to be undertaken each Lord's Day by converted believers, as a memorial of his love for us by His sacrificial death as the true Lamb of God, which made possible the forgiveness of our sins(1Corinthians 11:23-26 and Matthew 26:19-20, 26-29)**
- **By partaking of the symbols of bread and wine, we share or participate in the death of Christ and proclaim our continual faith in Jesus' sacrifice as we remember the sacrifice of Jesus' beaten body and shed blood.**
- **This was indeed a most momentous supper!**
- **WHAT A SUPPER!**

WHAT A CONTRAST! v2

**And supper being ended, the devil having now put
into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to
betray him;**

- While they were at supper, Satan inclined the mind of Judas to betray the Lord Jesus.
- Here we see a marked contrast between
- 1 love and hate;
- 2 the Savior and Satan;
- 3 "his own" and the traitor!
- 4 the self-giving Jesus and the self-serving Judas
- The mention of Judas here enhances the beauty of what follows and emphasizes the love which Jesus shewed in washing Judas' feet also.

WHAT OMNISCIENCE!

V 1, 2, 3, 11

V 1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father

V.3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

V11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

- **WHAT OMNISCIENCE!**
- **V 1** Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father
- **V.3** Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;
- **V11** For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.
- John is emphasizing in these 3 verses the fact that although Jesus *knew* all these things, he humbled Himself and washed the feet of His disciples as an expression of His great love for themit was His way of showing them (and us) how much He loved them.
- John wishes us to understand also that in spite of the fact that all authority had been given to Him Jesus washed the disciples' feet at a time when others would not have been inclined to do so and that Jesus was in complete control.
- He has all things in His hands or under His power, & does what with it?
- Washes feet. what humility!

- These three verses 1, 3, 11, which provide us with information about what Jesus “knew,”
- 1-indicate that Jesus was in control of everything, and are here stated, to enhance the love which Jesus shewed in His amazing action.
- 2- highlight His amazing love for His own, and
- 3- emphasize the condescension of the service to which He was about to humble Himself to do as a bonds slave in washing the disciples feet- and then in dying for us!“
- Jesus not only knew that His death was the Father’s will (v 1) but he also knew that Judas who (like the rest, would also have his feet washed) had already purposed to betray him (v2&v11).
- He knew that even his touching exhibition of condescending love and grace toward His disciples would make no impression upon Judas.
- It is extremely important to realize that Jesus washed the feet of one who he knew was considering betraying him (v2&v11).
- V 3 reads "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God"
- In this verse we see that Jesus knew about ...
- 1. His Divine origin, -- he had come from God [John 8:42](#).
- 2. His authority, --- the Father had given all things into his hands,
- 3. His coming glory, he was about to return to heaven, as he had predicted in [John 6:61-62](#).

WHAT LOVE V 1

Now before the feast of the passover, when **Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.**

- **"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."**
- **What a blessed expression- "his own"!**
- **"His own"! THE PERSONS WITH WHOM HE WAS ENGROSSED**
- **"His own" are the objects of HIS love;**
- **"unto the end" is the extent of His love.**
- **He loved "His own, knowing that they have been arguing (or will shortly do so) about who is the greatest.**
- **"He loved "His own" although He knew that Philip would misunderstand Him, that three of them would sleep while He prayed and agonized, that Peter would deny Him, that Thomas would doubt Him, and that all would "forsake him" and flee for their lives—yet He "loved them unto the end"!**

- **Having loved His own**
- **After all the previous conflicts with an unbelieving world, after all His unavailing appeals to Israel, Christ now lavishes His love upon the few who despised Him not.**
- **The first part of our verse tells us that although the Cross was before Him with all its horrors and though the joy of returning to the Father was before Him with all its bliss, yet neither the fearful prospect of woe nor the hope of unspeakable rest and gladness shook His love for “His own”.**
- **There is a love Jesus has for all people, “the world”, and then there is a love for “His own”. the dynamic of the love relationship is different. The love of Jesus for “His own” is greater, because it has a response, and love answers to love.**

- We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 6:19 that "Ye are not your own" and that we belong to Christ. We all know the delight which comes from being able to call something our own. It is not so much the value of what is possessed which constitutes this satisfaction, as it is the simple consciousness that it is mine.
- The Holy Spirit is here declaring the heart of the Savior in the terms of love.. He would have us taken up with Christ's thoughts about us! "His own"!
- We belong to the Lord Jesus in a threefold way.
- First, by the Father's eternal election. We are the Father's love-gift to the Son: "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."
- Second, we are His by His own redemptive rights. He paid the purchase price. He bought us for Himself: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
- Third, we are His by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. If any one be in Christ, he is a new creation, and we are created anew by the Holy Spirit for we are "born of the Spirit."

- Jesus had given the disciples constant proofs of his love by his calling them to follow him;
- by patiently teaching them;
- by bearing with their errors and weaknesses; and by making them the heralds of his truth and the heirs of eternal life.
- But now, whereas he was going to “depart out of this world unto the Father,” His own were remaining in it, exposed to the enmity and evil He was escaping.
- The thought of their feebleness and defencelessness, and their sufferings and imperfections, added fuel to the fire of His affection and so, he continued the proofs of his love until he was taken away from them by death.
- “He had loved his own who were in the world, and now he loved them to the very end” (John 13:1b).

- And now at this particular time John observed that **He loved them unto "the end"**
- **Unto "the end" of what? Who can define it?**
- **To the end** means He hadn't finished loving them, because His was a love that reaches to the fullest extent or the uttermost or eternally.
- **To the end** means a *love that will never end*. Jesus will never stop loving His own. It isn't a love that comes and goes, that is here today and gone tomorrow.
- Jesus poured out the cup of His love to the bottom for us.
- **"He loved them unto the end....."**not only unto the last, but to the farthest extent of their need and of His grace. He loved them to the end of His earthly life & to the end of love. His love is like a circle
- Though the disciples gave up on Him, He never gave up on them. Though they stopped thinking about Jesus, and were only thinking of themselves, He never stopped thinking of them.

- He loved them unto "the end", and so it is with us, dear Christian
- He loves us unto "the end" of our miserable failures, unto the "end" of our wanderings and backslidings, unto the "end" of our unworthiness, unto the "end" of our deep need.
- He loves us unto the end of our earthly pilgrimage because He has poured out the cup of His love to the bottom for us.
- He loves us unto the end because we need the assurance of His love as we pass through this wilderness.
- He will never withdraw his love from the soul. Though his people often walk in darkness and wander from him, His is the character of a friend that sticketh closer than a brother [Psalm 37:28](#); for "the Lord ... forsaketh not his saints" [Isaiah 49:14-17](#); [Proverbs 18:24](#)... He never leaves or forsakes us.

- **Since He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, therefore He does not change and His love never varies.**
- **Since He is eternal, He loves us with an everlasting love.**
- **Since He is Divine, therefore is His love different from all others, passing human knowledge.**
- **Here is the amazing thing.**
- **Jesus loves us, His own, knowing everything about us.**
- **It is one thing for people to love us, who do not know all of our wicked deeds, thoughts, and motivations.**
- **It is another for the Holy God of heaven to love us, knowing every wicked thing we have done and will do.**
- **This is, indeed, amazing love.**

- **What a comfort to the Christian, knowing that our Lord's love is constant and unchanging, knowing that He chose to love us—and to keep on loving us—to the uttermost degree, and to the very end, purely out of His grace, and not based upon our performance- but only because we are His own!**
- What love! What security! What grace! What a Savior!
- We can each sincerely ask
- **Jesu, what didst thou find in me,
that thou hast dealt so lovingly?
How great the joy that thou hast brought,
so far exceeding hope or thought!**
- Jesu, my Lord, I thee adore,
O make me love thee more and more.

WHAT A MARVELLOUS DEED! V 4-5

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments: and took a towel, and girded himself" After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

- **This was an act of**
- **1. Amazing condescension & 2. Sublime significance.**
- **Seven distinct actions are attributed to the Savior in these verses:**
- He
- **(1) riseth from supper, and**
- **(2) laid aside his garments, and**
- **(3) took a towel, and**
- **(4) girded himself.**
- **After that he (5) Poureth water into a basin, and**
- **(6) began to wash the disciples' feet, and**
- **(7) to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."**
- Let us trace the parallel in the events which John records here.

- On this evening before the torture of the cross, Jesus doesn't think of Himself, but about His disciples, and gave Himself to washing their feet. Look at how thorough He was in this work.
- First, **Jesus rose from supper**, a place of rest and comfort, just as he had previously risen from his throne of glory in heaven, a place of rest and comfort.
- Then he "**laid aside his outer garments**," just as He had laid aside his glory and the exercise of his own deity when he came into the world at His incarnation. He did not come to act as God; he came to act as man indwelt by God.
- When Jesus laid aside His garments, this had to remind Him of what waited in just a few hours, when He would be stripped of His garments and be crucified.
- Jesus then **took a towel and girded Himself**, humbling himself and taking the role of a slave, girding himself with a towel being ready to serve. just as he "took the form of a servant," and "humbled himself and became obedient unto death," (Philippians 2:7-8).
- Finally Jesus **poured water into a basin**. ready to clean, just as in a few hours he was to pour out his own blood in death, the blood which would be for the cleansing of human defilement, of human guilt of every kind and source. So he pours water into the basin as a picture of that.
- Truly, this is **loving them to the end**. After all, Jesus' disciples treated Him badly - and were about to treat Him even worse, forsaking Him completely - yet He loved them.

- **Then he began to wash the disciples' feet: in great condescension, he began to do the job of the lowest servant in the household.**
- **Then he "wiped them with the towel with which he was girded," picturing the very act of applying the cleansing of his own blood to human lives.**
- **"Then when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments," he "resumed his place," i.e Jesus sat down again ([John 13:12](#)), just as he sat down at the right hand of God the Father after cleansing us totally from sin, just as the writer of Hebrews records for us in Hebrews 1:3 thus...**
- **"When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high".**
- **Thus you have this remarkable, beautiful parable worked out for us, teaching us the meaning of his whole ministry**
- **If Jesus wanted to just display the *image* of a servant, He would have had a servant or one of the disciples do all this preparation work. He then would have quickly wiped a damp cloth on a few dirty feet and consider the job done. That would give the *image* of servanthood and loving leadership, but Jesus gave Himself *completely* to this work.**
- **This was an *extreme* act of servanthood. According to the Jewish laws and traditions regarding the relationship between a teacher and his disciples, a teacher had no right to demand or expect that his disciples would wash his feet. How much more unthinkable was it that the Master would wash His disciple's feet?**
- **"He disrobed himself, though angels longed to cast the imperial purple about his shoulders. With all things in his hand, he yet took a towel and wiped the disciples' feet. " (Spurgeon)**

- **The water with which the Savior here cleansed the soiled feet of His disciples was an emblem of the Word: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm 119:9).**
- **Fully and blessedly is this brought out in Ephesians 5:25 , 26:"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."**
- Every clause of this passage is found here in John 13.
- He 'loved' them, the Church. He 'gave himself' for them, the 'supper' setting forth that: that He might 'sanctify,' separate to Himself, thus they were 'his own'; and 'cleanse' it with the washing of water by the Word. It is complete; His constant, perfect provision for our being kept clean."
- **It is to be particularly observed that the Lord did not leave this work unfinished or half done: like a perfect servant, our Lord not only "washed" their feet, but He "wiped" them as well!**

- In all of this, Jesus essentially acted out a parable for the disciples.
- Jesus knew better that actions speak louder than words.
- So when He wanted to teach the proud, arguing disciples about true humility, He didn't just *say* it - He *showed* it.
- And He showed it in a way that illustrated His whole work on behalf of *His own*.
- We know this whole lesson did "stick" powerfully, because decades later, when Peter wrote to Christians about humility, he put it like this: *Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility*([1 Peter 5:5](#)).
- More literally, Peter wrote: "**wrap the apron of humility around yourself.** " Surely, what Jesus did here stuck in his mind, and in his heart.

- **It's interesting that none of the disciples had volunteered for the job!**
- **“The room was filled with proud hearts and dirty feet. The disciples were willing to fight for a throne, but not a towel.”**
- **In this event , there is an obvious reversal of roles**
- **The one into whose hands the Father had given all (13:3) now takes his disciples' feet into his hands to wash them, as though he was a common slave.**
- **In Jesus' action of feet washing, the Lord is here teaching humility, which is one of the essential attributes of discipleship.**

WHAT AN INTERRUPTION v 6

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

- **We will not discuss Peter's fault in interruption. Instead we will focus on what our proper response ought to be with respect to the Lord's actions on our behalf.**
- **As believers we ought to be in such subjection to Christ and so confident in Him, that we yield ourselves in obedience to Him, so that every thing which he declares to be agreeable to Him shall also be approved by us, without any scruple.**
- **As believers we are called on to accept what ever He does with thankfulness of heart, and obey just as Mary said to the servants at the marriage-feast, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' (John2:5)**
- **As believers we ought not to think that we know better than Jesus what is appropriate and what is not.nor should we protest against His omniscience (knowing all) and His sovereignty (absolute control).**
- **As believers we ought not to protest against divine *grace*. What Jesus does for us His disciples, He does out of love and grace, which is precisely what He was doing when he was interrupted by Peter.**

WHAT A REBUKE v7

**"Jesus answered and said unto him,
What I do thou knowest not now;
but thou shalt know hereafter"**

- **"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter"**
- **This was really a LOVING tender rebuke, whose meaning is briefly, as follows:**
- **Peter, this washing is a symbolical action, intended to teach you all a lesson of humility and love in such a manner that it would be impossible for you ever to forget it.**
- **Had I simply commanded you to be humble, it would have been far less forcible and impressive than when you saw me actually performing the office of a servant.**
- **My act of love is a mere picture, or a sample, of the work which I shall perform for "My own" when I return to the Father.**
- **Although you do not see the significance of it now, you will later, when the Holy Spirit has come who will guide you into all truth.**

- **God often does things which we do not fully understand initially. He often afflicts us, disappoints us, and frustrates our plans.**
- **Why it is we do not know now, but we later learn that it was for our good, and designed to teach us some important lesson of humility and piety.**
- **We ought therefore, in view of this, to submit ourselves to him, to hush every murmur, and complaint knowing that he does all things well.**
- **It is a blessing when we are willing to receive affliction at the hand of God, the reason of which we cannot see, content with the belief that we may see it hereafter, or, even if we never do, still having so much confidence in God as to believe that what He does is right.**

WHAT A REFUSAL v8

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

- **Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet**
- **Instead of gladly submitting to the most high Sovereign now performing the service of a slave, Peter plunges still further into worse error and refused to let Jesus wash his feet.**
- **Peter's refusal to be washed by Jesus was improper, because Jesus had just declared that it had a meaning, and that he ought to submit to it.**
- **At first glance, Peter's objection appears to be a humble statement arising out of his own sense of inadequacy and unworthiness before Jesus....or that he is humiliated that Jesus should ever take such a low position as to wash his feet .**
- **But when you look a bit closer you can see that it is really the expression of intense personal pride, and a remarkable picture of the sinful pride of human beings who reject the cleansing ministry of Jesus.**

- One of the remarkable things about our relation to God is that it requires that we yield to all of His requirements , even if we cannot see how obedience would promote his glory.
- We must stand in utter humiliation and abjectness in order for God to minister to us.
- All human pride must be brought low before him, before we can receive what God wants to give us from his hand.
- And that is where we struggle, because we don't like to be delivered to a place where we ourselves have nothing to offer. We want to add something. Peter's action here is a clear picture of this.
- Peter's actions were prompted by the same well-meaning, but false humility that prevents many from stooping to receive at the hands of the Lord that spiritual washing which is absolutely necessary in order to have any part in Him. ([Romans 8:9](#))

- **In response to Peter's rejection (v. 8), "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."**
- **If I wash thee not** had immediate reference to the act of washing his feet; and it denotes that if Peter did not have confidence in him as to believe that an act which Jesus performed was proper, though he could not see its immediate value - if he was not willing to submit his will to that of Christ and implicitly obey him, he had nothing in common with Jesus
- If Peter would resist having Jesus wash his feet, on the premise that he is unworthy, then he must also reject having his sins washed away by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, for he is unworthy of this as well.
- To reject any part of grace is to reject all grace.
- **Whoever has not his feet washed by Jesus, is accounted as wholly unwashed.**

- What is meant by "no part with me?"
- The word for *part (meros)* can be used of one's share in an inheritance (cf. Lk 15:12).
- The word "part" has reference to fellowship. This is seen from our Lord's words concerning Mary in Luke 10:42, where we read "Mary hath chosen that good part." The meaning of this word "part" is clearly defined again in 2Corinthians 6:15 , "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"
- Whoever is not washed by Jesus, has no part in Him, i.e has nothing in common with Him, i.e no fellowship with Him and therefore no participation in His glory.
- This foot washing is more than a powerful lesson in humility. The deeper meaning here is that those who have not been cleansed by Jesus have no fellowship with Him.
- If we are to have a share with Jesus and the community of His saints and the eternal life that comes through faith in him, then we must be washed by Jesus. ...both initially in the one time full bath , and periodically in the foot baths.
- If we do not accept these provisions by Jesus for our cleansing, we have no part with Him.

- **For three years the disciples had "a part" with Him. But now He was about to leave them; but before doing so He would assure them (and us) that His wondrous love continues undiminished and unchanged after His return to the Father.**
- **Christ began a service here which, He would continue forever, and a service in which He is now engaged that maintains our "part" with Him.**
- **We are totally unable to wash our own feet, either for the saving of our souls, or for the cleansing of our defiled walk.**
- **Our feet must be in His hands, that is to say, we must completely yield to Him.**

- **"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." What is this "washing"?**
- It is something which is needed by all believers, if we are to enjoy our "part" with Him.
- This "washing" includes confession of sin and the consequent forgiveness, as well as the searching out of the Word, in the presence of God, to understand the root, of which our sins are the fruit.
- This "washing" is part of God's remedy for our declension and failure, as well as His gracious provision for our daily need, as a preservative and preventative against outward failures.
- **We need to get alone with our Lord each day, opening our hearts to His Light as we examine our ways before Him.**
- **To really place our feet for washing in the blessed hands of Christ is to come before Him in the attitude of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23 , 24). This is imperatively necessary if, while in such a defiling place as " this world", we are to have a "part" with Him.**

- In washing the feet of His disciples Jesus not only displayed a marvellous humility, but He also demonstrated His love.
- In washing the feet of His disciples He was illustrating His concern about fellowship with Himself, and that strict attention must be paid to the fact that when in our walk with Him, the feet are soiled, that the dust of this world must be removed.
- This incident reminds us that the same grace which brought salvation teaches us, that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2:11 , 12).

WHAT AN ABOUT FACE! v 9

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

- **Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.**
- **The thought of having no part with Jesus was too much for Peter.**
- **When he heard that to refuse to have his feet washed meant that he had no part with Jesus, he rushed to the opposite extreme, and with characteristic impulsiveness he desired to be cleansed thoroughly, because more than anything else, Peter's greatest desire was to identify and to participate fully in all that Jesus would graciously grant.**

- A true Christian is desirous of being cleansed from all sin. He wishes that all evil propensity should be removed, and that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.
- A true Christian is desirous that “his whole body, soul, and spirit should be sanctified wholly and be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ” as Paul prayed in 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
- A true Christian is desirous that His intellect, his will, his affections, his fancy, his memory, his judgment, his desires should be all brought under the influence of the gospel, and every power of his body and his mind be consecrated unto God.
- A true Christian is desirous to have a part with Him.

WHAT AN EXPLANATION v 10

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

- **Ever so graciously, Jesus denies this request of Peter and corrects him for the third time by explaining that a person who has had such a bath has had his whole person cleansed, and needs only to wash his feet periodically, as a necessity to remain completely fit for communion with the Lord.**
- **In this verse, Jesus gives us a beautiful explanation of the process of salvation, which begins with a spiritual bath.**
- **The initial coming to Christ, in which we take the place of bankruptcy before him, coming without any of our own righteousness to offer, and allowing him to cleanse us from our sins, is likened to a bath in which we are washed all over, completely, from head to foot.**
- **Jesus here lovingly explained what the Bible calls "justification by faith." When one first comes to Christ, they are bathed and cleansed all over. There is a washing away of all the guilt, all the defilement, and all the evil and sin of the entire life -- past, present, and future.**

- This washing which believers receive in Christ needs not to be ever repeatedit is a cleansing which is never lost. Hebrews 10:14 teaches **"By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are set apart"** and Colossians 1:12 states that the believer has been **"purged from all sin, and made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light"** (Colossians 1:12).
- This purging needs no repetition.
- The efficacy of His precious blood abides upon us eternally. The moment a sinner, drawn by the Holy Spirit, comes to Christ, he is completely and finally cleansed. It is the apprehension of this which gives a firm rock for our feet to rest upon.
- It assures us that our hope is a stable one; that our standing before God is immutable. It banishes doubt and uncertainty. It gives the heart and mind abiding peace to know that the benefits conferred upon the believer in Christ are never to be recalled as clearly taught in Roman 9:33.
- We are brought out from under condemnation and placed in a state of everlasting acceptance. All this, and more, is included in the "bathing" which Christ has declared needs not to be repeated.
- We stand resplendent in the sight of God in all the Savior's beauty and perfections. God looks upon believers not merely as forgiven, but as righteous: as truly as Christ was "made sin" for us, so have we been "made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor 5:21)

- **But in addition to this blessed truth that the initial bathing in Christ needs not, and cannot be, repeated, stands another truth of great practical importance.**
- **There is a partial cleansing which the believer still needs, a daily washing to counteract the defiling effects of this world.**
- **As we walk through life, Jesus knows, there will be defilement contracted in the feet, in the walk that needs to be washed away.**
- **Our daily contact with the evil all around causes the dust of defilement to settle upon us so that the mirror of our conscience is dimmed and the spiritual affections of our heart are dulled.**
- **Thus he teaches us that not only do we need that initial never-to-be-repeated cleansing, which washes us as a bath; but we need also the many-times-repeated experience of forgiveness, of coming to Christ for the cleansing away of the defilement of our walk, and being forgiven again and again and again, over and over again.**
- **It is this which determines that we have a part with him.**

- **We stress again that Jesus was here teaching that it is only the believer's walk which needs repeated cleansing, and that believers need not be fully washed all over again because the believer is clean and has been bathed and fully cleansed by His shed blood and does not need to be "washed" over and over again; he only needs a foot washing.**
- **This verse certainly debunks the false teaching of those who preach that a full bath is required all over again when ever one sins, and that they can lose their salvation and have to start all over in their Christian experience and that they need to be born, not only again, but again and again and again, as though the Holy Spirit had stuttered when he said, "regeneration," and had made it, "re-re-re-re-regeneration!"**
- **But Jesus teaches us clearly that only one bath is needed. This is reflected in the truth of baptism. You are baptized once, as the initial act. But our preparation for the Lord's Supper reflects the washing of the feet, and the need for the cleansing again and again through life from the defilement and the guilt of sin.**

- **Since they had already been washed, it was unnecessary to repeat it; all that was needed now was for him to show this act of hospitality, condescension and humility in washing their feet in his office as a servant.**
- **The foot-washing represented to them, and us besides its lesson of humility and brotherly love, the daily need of cleansing from daily pollution.**
- **The footwashing symbolized that they have received him as the one come from God, and now he reveals more clearly the love that characterizes the Father.**
- **Here, as in verse 8, though Jesus is addressing Peter on a spiritual level as an individual, he is also speaking to the disciples as a group ...and to us.**

- **It is most significant that nothing is said here about the washing of the disciples' hands. This is a big contrast between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations.**
- **Under the law, where there was so much of doing, the priests were required to wash both their hands and their feet (Exodus 30:19); but under grace all has been done for us, and if the walk be right, the work will be acceptable!**

WHAT OMNISCIENCE! v 11
WHAT A HARD HEART! v 11

**For he knew who should betray him; therefore
said he, Ye are not all clean.**

- We will here add to what we have earlier said on this verse
- When in verse 8 Jesus said “and ye are clean, but not all” he there clarified that the “cleansing” of which He spoke did not belong to all who were with Him at the moment.
- There was one disciple that did not have the bath of the new birth, and spiritual regeneration...Judas.
- The others had all been made clean by his word (cf. 15:3), because they had received the light of revelation that Jesus has offered, and had accepted him and his teaching as having come from God (cf. 17:6-8).
- As a result they had become one with him to the extent that this was possible before the cross, resurrection, ascension and coming of the Spirit.
- In contrast, Judas was unclean in the sense that he had not received Jesus by faith, and was an unclean presence among the body of believers present.
- In his case it was not a matter of losing spiritual life, but of manifesting the fact that he never had it in the first place. He was not a sheep of Christ becoming unclean, but a dog returning to his vomit.(2Peter 2:22)

WHAT A QUESTION v12

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

- So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?
- "Know ye what I have done to you?" Do you know the meaning or design of what I have done unto you?
- Very searching is this question because it is deeply humbling when we discover how little we understood the love and the grace by which God has been acting on our behalf.
- This is a question which we should often put to ourselves with regard to what our Lord says in His word, and what He does to us.
- These words were uttered, not so much in expectation of an answer, as to direct their/our attention to the fact that He only can explain His intentions, and that he does not want us to remain ignorant of them, since it is for our benefit to understand his will.
- In His question the Lord illustrates how that it is His way to teach us afterwards the good which He has already done for us.
- As we grow up in Him in the truth, we are enabled to enter into and appreciate more deeply what at first we understood but slightly.
- All His works and words are full of meaning, and are all intended to serve a good purpose. It is thus of importance, that we should be aware of it.
- If we look at His work in the light of His Word, and seek the guidance of His good Spirit, we shall generally be able to discern His wise and well meaning purpose, even in circumstances that are at first sight very strange and mysterious.

WHAT A CONFESSION!13

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am"

- "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am"
- He reminds them that it is by their own confession that they call or address Him as Master" or "teacher" and Lord; and you are right. I am indeed your teacher, and your Lord -- your teacher, with the right to instruct you; your Lord, with the right to command you."
- The word **Lord** is applied to one who rules, and is often given to God as being the Proprietor and Ruler of all things. It is given to Christ many hundred times in the New Testament.
- Note that He did not say, "I am your teacher and Lord," but that "Ye call me teacher and Lord." It was from the confession of their own lips that He now proceeds to instruct them.
- The order in which these titles occur is significant. First, these disciples had heard Christ as "Master" or "teacher", and later they had come to know Him as their "Lord." But now Christ reverses the order: "If I then, your Lord and teacher." Why is this? Because this is the experiential order now. The "Master" or "teacher" is believed; the "Lord" is obeyed.
- We must surrender to Him as "Lord," bowing to His authority, submitting to His yoke, before He will teach us!
- In thus owning the incarnate Son of God they "did well."
- Jesus is the Lord of glory, and surely He is due the dignity and majesty of His person that He should be recognized and owned, even in our very references to Him.
- We who have been, by amazing grace, given "an understanding, that we may know him that is true" (1 John 5:20) ought gladly to confess Him as "The Lord Jesus Christ"!

- **John 13: 12-17 SUMMARY**
- **In the second section of John 13, in verses 12-17, after the Lord Jesus had finished the washing of the disciples feet and had reclined at the table again, He asked a penetrating question to drive this message into their hearts, and intimated very plainly that, there was a spiritual meaning in His washing of their feet.**
- **He then explained what He did, and called His disciples to follow His example and wash one another's feet. If they shrank from such lowly service, He reminded them that none other than He, their Master and Lord, had done so much for them.**
- **He then warned them that a theoretical knowledge of these things was of no value, unless it resulted in an actual carrying out of them: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."**
- **This reminds us of James' teaching that we are to be doers of the word and not hearers only**
- ²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
- ²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
- ²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

WHAT AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW! V14- 15

If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.
For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

- **This marvellous obligation (verses 14, 15) arising from Christ's example calls us as His disciples to**
- **1. Personal humility**. We are not to be puffed up with thoughts of their own greatness.
- **2. Loving service**. Christ's example is to be followed spiritually in ministering to necessity and practising Christian kindness.
- **3. Brotherly forgiveness**. Christ has washed and therefore forgiven us; we are to likewise practice the charity which covers a multitude of sins

- "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet" "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet"
- Christ then proceeded to enforce and apply what He had just done unto them by connection his foot washing to what He desires of us.
- His argument is, "since I, with the acknowledged position of authority in your lives, as your Lord and Master have washed your feet, then you should also wash one another's feet."
- The command given here must be understood in the full light of intelligent appreciation of the circumstances and the meaning of the act.
- We need to fully understand
- WHAT FOOT WASHING IS NOT
- WHAT FOOT WASHING IS ,.....and
- How TO WASH FEET
- a- what to do
- b- what not to do

- **WHAT FOOT WASHING IS**
- *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*
- **I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”**
- Does this mean that foot washing is supposed to be a church ordinance today?
- **NO. Jesus is showing us that if the Son of God could humble Himself and serve, then we must do the same.**
- Jesus is revealing in verses 14 & 15 that servanthood is in fact the responsibility of those who follow Him.
- *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. And we must do likewise.*
- We must not like the disciples, be filled with a worldly spirit of criticism and competition as we try to position ourselves in the best light and maneuver things for our own gain.
- We desperately need this lesson in humility.

WHAT FOOT WASHING IS NOT

- Some persons have taken the phrase “Ye also ought to wash one another's feet”, very literally and have concluded incorrectly that this was a command from Christ for His followers to institute a religious rite and practice literal foot-washing.
- As a result, they have exalted foot-washing into a "Church ordinance, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- And there are a few groups who, very sincerely, have what they call "foot-washing services," when they wash one another's feet.
- However, we are fully satisfied that they have mistaken our Lord's meaning here, since this was definitely not the design.
- Surely to insist upon literal foot-washing from this verse is to miss the meaning as well as the spirit of the whole passage.
- There is no evidence that Jesus intended it as a religious observance, like the Lord's Supper or the ordinance of baptism, and it was not observed by the apostles or the early Christians as a religious rite before the fourth century.
- So what does he mean when he says that we ought to wash one another's feet?

- **WHAT FOOT WASHING IS**
- It is not with literal water that the Lord would have us wash one another.
- It is the Word (of which "water" is the emblem) that He would have us apply to our fellow-disciples' walk.
- The deep spiritual meaning of the footwashing – the forgiveness of sin – is what Jesus is commanding us to copy, to imitate. Christ is here telling us to be ready all through our life to wash the feet of our brethren, by lovingly serving and forgiving them, as he has done.
- The comparative word "as" in this verse looks back to the fact in John 13:4 that it was as girded with a towel that Christ washed the feet of His disciples, and that which was signified by the "towel" applies to us.
- The "towel" with which Christ was girded bespoke the servant's attitude.
- The Lord used that with which He was girded upon their feet: symbolically, applying to them the humility which marked Him.
- It was His own spotless love which fitted Him to approach His disciples and apply the Word to them.
- If we would imitate and emulate Him in this labor of love we must ourselves be clothed with humility, and we must employ nothing but the Word, and we must have on the linen towel of practical righteousness to dry with.
- Our Lord's action was symbolical, and is best imitated in His followers by following the injunction of [Galatians 6:1](#).....“if a man be overtaken in a fault, to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness:” [Galatians 6:1](#).

- **Jesus plainly and powerfully points out that the attitude that must mark His followers is that of washing one another's feet.**
- **Anything we do for each another that washes away the grime of the world and the dust of defeat and discouragement is foot washing.**
- **What he means is that just as we need His cleansing and forgiveness in order to maintain the sense of unity and refreshment of spirit in our Christian life, so we need to forgive one another, to extend to one another free forgiveness for guilt and for the injury that we may do to one another.**
- **CHECK Matt 6:12 ,14-15; Galatians 6:3; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13**

- **It was the manifest intention of Jesus here also to inculcate a lesson of humility; and to teach them, and us, by his example that they ought to condescend to the most humble offices for the benefit of others.**
- **Especially since the disciples were to be founders of the church, and to be greatly honored, he took this occasion of warning them against the dangers of ambition, and of teaching them, by an example that they could not forget, the duty of humility**
- **The washing of their feet, which the Lord performed for His disciples, had as its object both the benefit of the inculcation of the lesson of humble love, which they needed to be taught**

- **How TO WASH FEET**
- a- what to do
- b- what not to do
- If we are going to wash one another's feet, we should be careful of the temperature of the water.
- Sometimes we try to wash someone with our water too *hot* - we are too fervent and zealous.
- Sometimes our water is too *cold* - we are cold and distant in heart to them. The temperature needs to be in the middle.
- We should also remember that we can't *dry-clean* someone else's feet.
- Jesus washed us *with the washing of water by the word* ([Ephesians 5:26](#)), we should use the same "water" in ministering to others.
- In washing *one another's* feet we must not mimick the world and the public press that criticize and gossip. That is the world's way.
- Christ's way is very different. He says nothing, but takes the basin and begins to wash away the stain of our sin.
- Similarly, we are not to judge and condemn: instead we must seek the restoration and the improvement of the erring brother, or sister. “
- We are to be, in the words of Paul, "tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us," (Ephesians 4:32 KJV). This is what Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer, isn't? "Forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive those who have trespassed against us," Matthew 6:12). He is exhorting Christians to forgive each other, and his authority to do so is based upon his own example.

- a- what to do
- Let us consider the application of these words to ourselves .
- we have to beware of looking on the sins and failures of our brethren with Pharisaic complacency and cold indifference.
- I have to get down to my brother's feet if I am to wash them! That means that "the flesh" in me must be subdued. Let us not forget that searching word in Galatians 6:1 , 2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
- I must be emptied of all sense of self-superiority before I can restore one who is "out of the way." It is the love of Christ which must constrain me as I seek to be of help to one of those for whom He died. It is as "dear children" (Ephesians 5:1) that we are called upon to be "imitators of God"! Very wonderful and blessed is what is here before us: when the Lord appoints on earth a witness of His ways in Heaven, He tells us to wash one another's feet, and to love one another (John 13:34).
- There must be a patient forbearing with our brother's faults, a faithful but tender applying of the Word to his particular case, and an earnest and daily intercession for him: these are the main things included in this figure of "washing."
- But let us not stop short at the "washing": there must be the "drying," too! The service when done must be regarded as a service of the past. The failure which called for it, is now removed, and therefore is to be buried in the depths of oblivion. It ought never to be cast against the individual in the future.

- **b- what not to do**
- **"In discovering any stain that may be resting on the feet of our brethren, we are not to blind ourselves to its presence, or to hide from ourselves its character by calling evil good.**
- We are not to find joy in searching out iniquities of others , and exulting in exposing and magnifying them when discovered? Instead we are to remember that “ with whatsoever judgment they Judges , they shall be judged; and that the measure they mete out to others shall be meted out to themselves again.
- **So we should not be as those who ‘bite and devour one another,’ but be as those who ‘wash one another's feet’“**
- **We ought not to be proud, and vain, and unwilling to occupy a low place, but to regard ourselves as the servants of each other, and as willing to befriend each other in every way.**
- No Christian has any right to sit in self-righteous judgment upon another. We may bring them, as we are exhorted to do, under the searching light of the Word of God.
- We may, out of concern and compassion for their welfare, expose to them what they are doing, as Jesus does here with his disciples.
- But in no sense are we to do so with self-righteousness, with the suggestion that we would never do a thing like that. Nor are we to demand that they first apologize before we forgive, or that they in some way repay us, or straighten out what they have done, before we extend to them a free and open acceptance and forgiveness.

- Jesus knows that it is difficult, sometimes, to forgive, that the flesh within cries out for revenge.
- We want somebody to pay for what they have done to us. We want to extract some kind of return for the injury. And oftentimes we love the feeling of carrying a grudge, or of resisting the overtures of the other person. We like the feeling of telling them off, giving them a piece of our mind, ripping into them.
- **But Jesus says that when we are doing that, we are doing what he would not do. We are asserting our prerogatives, we are demanding our rights, we are insisting upon the privilege and status that we feel we have before others.**
- **And we are forgetting that our Lord and Master humbled himself, though he was rightfully our Teacher and our Lord, rightfully the Lord of Glory, the One with every right to the worship of men. Nevertheless he laid it all aside, did not demand it, did not seek it, did not insist upon it, and washed the feet of his own disciples. And so he says that we must do the same for one another.**
- So when we resist this kind of ministry, when we don't want to forgive, or we don't want somebody to come and seek to wash our feet with the Word, we are doing what Peter did, refusing to following the admonition of our Lord

WHAT ADVICE! v16

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him"

- **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him"**
- **The Lord Jesus here explains His symbolic action, and gives an important lesson from what He had just done.**
- **The major thing we should observe from this passage is that our Lord taught His disciples by His deeds, and not just by His declarations.**
- **That the injunction in this verse is of more than ordinary importance is evidenced by the solemn and emphatic "Verily, verily" with which the Lord prefaced it.**
- **Moreover, the fact that at a later point in this same discourse the Lord said to His apostles, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord" (John 15:20), shows that this lesson is one which is specially needed by all believers.**
- **Since He, as the sovereign God, can wash their dirty feet, then surely they should do likewise to one another.**
- **Rather than arguing with each other about who is regarded to be the greatest, they should be humbling themselves by serving one another.**
- **Rather than striving to possess the "rights" of the one who ranks highest, they should seize the opportunity to serve others by doing menial tasks.**
- **Put differently, even those "on the top" can and should minister "from the bottom up." In a "top-down" world, this is a revolutionary concept.**

- **Jesus has washed the feet of the disciples purposefully. It was a way that Jesus demonstrated His unfathomable love for His disciples.**
- **It was a lesson in humility which the disciples desperately needed to learn, as they were still looking at leadership from a “secular” point of view, rather than from a divine perspective.**
- **The secular world looks upon leadership as the opportunity to be served. A leader has many people “under him,” and thus he “uses” them to minister to his own needs.**
- **In the kingdom of God, a position of leadership is simply a place of service. No matter where one finds himself on the leader-follower scale, the Christian is to serve God by serving others. Leadership is simply one place of service. It enables one to serve as others cannot.**
- **We must not be like Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence (3 John 9**

WHAT A WAY TO HAPPINESS! v17

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them

- **"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"**
- If ye know what "things"?
- **First, the vital need of placing our feet in the hands of Christ for cleansing (John 13:8).**
- **Second, the owning of Christ as "Master and Lord" (John 13:13).**
- **Third, the need of washing one another's feet (John 13:14).**
- **Fourth, the performing of this ministry as Christ performed it— in lowly love (John 13:15).**
- **The Savior said , If ye know "these things," happy or blessed are ye if ye do them.**

- This statement, “If you understand these things, you will be blessed if you do them” is profoundly important, because the important thing is not the knowing of this truth, but the doing of it.
- We are not blessed so much by what we know as we are blessed by the doing of what we know.
- This applies to far more than just this one command. It applies across the entire spectrum of biblical knowledge.
- There are some folks who do not *know* as much as others, but they *do* far more than those “in the know.” ... for knowledge is designed to produce such an effect on believers as to lead us to conform ourselves to our Head.
- A mere speculative knowledge of such things is of no value without the embodiment of them in our daily lives
- The *theory* of being a servant isn't worth very much. But the *practice* of being a servant pleases God and fulfills our calling.
- Perhaps it is true that until we have learned to yield to our brethren, we do not *know* if Christ be *the Master*.

- If we want to become servants, we can't just wait for something to happen. Jesus said we're blessed when we do something.
- Here are four action steps.
- **1. Serve whenever you can.**
- **2. Serve wherever you can.**
- **3. Serve whoever is in need.**
- **4. Be willing to do whatever it takes.**