

John 13

- I. 13:1-20 Servant Leadership
- II. 13:21-38 Sincere Discipleship

The first twelve chapters of John cover the three years or so of Christ's public ministry. The next seven chapters, 13 – 19, cover less than 24 hours, from “The Last Supper” to His death upon the cross.

- I. 13:1-20 Servant Leadership

- A. 13:1 *to the end* or “utterly and completely” (Nelson Study Bible), “He now showed the disciples the full extent of his love.” (New Living Translation)

- i. Jesus is about to show the full extent of His love by:

- a) His humble service, in which he sets an example.
 - b) His teaching, through which He prepared them for all that was about to happen.
 - c) His death on the cross – the ultimate evidence of Christ's love.

- B. 13:3-5 The washing of feet was normally a task done by a servant. Apparently, no servant was present and it didn't occur to any of the disciples to do it. In fact, according to Luke, it seems they were in the midst of a really stupid argument.

Luke 22:24-27 (NKJV) ²⁴Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. ²⁵[So Jesus corrects them and teaches them by saying], “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ ²⁶But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

By the way, Judas was still present at this time, so Jesus washed his feet also.

- C. 13:10 *he who is bathed needs only to wash* Jesus is making a spiritual application:

- i. We are thoroughly cleansed from the guilt of sin at the time of our conversion. The day that you said yes to Jesus Christ, that sin was washed away.

*Titus 3:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, **through the washing of regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

- ii. Still, you might say our “feet” get dirty on a daily basis, even when we walk with the Lord. Listen to John explain the two types of cleansing – from *sin* and from *sins*:

*1 John 1:7-9 (NKJV) ⁷But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.** ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹**If we confess our sins**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

D. 13:11 *He knew who would betray Him*

John 6:64 (NKJV) "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

John 6:70-71 (NKJV) Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

E. 13:16 *he who is sent* Greek *apostolos* or "apostle"

F. 13:17 The blessing is in the doing, not just the knowing what to do. We will find our greatest blessing and fulfillment in serving others.

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

- Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), medical missionary to Africa

G. 13:18-19 Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that He was being betrayed in fulfillment of prophecy. Things were not about to spin out of control.

Application: Focus on 13:17

- Serving others is the best way to exercise the liberty we have in Christ.

Galatians 5:13 (NKJV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

- Serving Others is Christlike Leadership. Check out 13:12-17 once again. Jesus wants us to be more like Him. Then look at the following:

Matthew 20:25-28 (NKJV) ²⁵But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- Earlier in the supper, the disciples were disputing over who among them was the greatest. Jesus doesn't condemn them for wanting to be great. He rather clarifies the path to greatness, which we so often misunderstand.
- How can we best imitate the concept of foot washing today? There are many ideas:
 - Some would do it ceremonially and do it as we would baptism or communion.
 - Others would liken it to any form of humble service that we engage in.
 - Here is one suggestion:

Matthew 7:12 (NKJV) Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

II. 13:21-38 Sincere Discipleship

A. 13:22 It was still not evident to them what Judas was about to do.

B. 13:23 *whom Jesus loved* This is John's way of referring to himself. I have been guilty of doubting that love. I wonder if you understand how much Jesus loves you.

C. 13:24-26 John and Peter were apparently the only ones in on this fact.

“The Christian who is closest to Christ's heart is the one who discovers His secrets.”
- Warren Wiersbe

D. 13:34-35 Loving your neighbor as yourself was the standard in the Old Testament:

Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV) You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Loving one another as Christ loved us is the new standard among believers. John liked to emphasize this in his later teaching.

1 John 3:16 (NKJV) By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1 John 4:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Needless to say, the world doesn't consistently see this kind of love among Christians.

Application: Focus on Christ's Love for Us:

- **Christ's Love Is Intentional:** It involved several acts of His will and a deliberate humbling of Himself.
 - Obeying His command to love one another will involve real decisions on our part as well.
- **Christ's Love Is Sacrificial:** Washing feet, allowing yourself to be betrayed, going to the cross to benefit others – these are all acts of sacrifice and Christ calls us to do the same for one another.
 - David once said that he would not offer “to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). The same can be applied to Christlike love. Love is costly.
- **Christ's Love Is Unconditional:** He washed Judas' feet. He fully expected Peter to deny Him. And He knew all the ways that we would some day sin against Him long before He ever went to the cross.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- **Our assignment:** To express that intentional, sacrificial, unconditional love for one another.