

Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet

John 13:1-17

Introduction

The Fourth Gospel has been called the Christian's Holy Place. If this is true, then in chapters 13-17, we enter into the "Holy of Holies."

We encounter here our Lord's teaching on heaven, the person and work of the Holy Spirit and the mystery of our union with Christ. We also learn much about prayer and, most of all, *The New Commandment*.

You have heard it said: "Actions speak louder than words. Sometimes only actions can speak."

The Teaching Ministry of Christ in Public Comes to an End (13:1-3)

The public ministry of Christ, prior to his sufferings and death, is now over. Jesus is about to leave his disciples.

The time trigger can be seen in verse 1.

The reason for his actions which follow is also seen in verse 1.

In chapters 1-12 John uses "love" and "to love" nine times.

In chapters 13-17 he uses them thirty times.

The Action Our Lord Took to Reveal His Love (13:4-5)

The dominant theme here is to show these disciples how much he loves them.

The action of washing feet is not remarkable.

What is remarkable?

Who did this act of service (cf. John 1:27)

The disciples did many things for their Master but never this. Loosing the sandal thongs was forbidden.

But here there are no servants and no volunteers, only Jesus!

A Demonstration of Humility (13:4-11)

This is a parable we can never forget. It reveals the *character* of Christ's mission.

What about "foot washing"? How do we hear and practice this act of humility?

Cf. 1 John 1:7

This episode marvelously symbolizes this truth.

None of their reactions are recorded except for Peter's.

A Declaration About Humility (13:12-17)

Our Lord gives two explanations for his actions here.

1. A theological explanation
2. A practical explanation

Verse 14 underscores the place of humility in our life.

1. It is not an option
2. It means putting others ahead of ourselves
3. It never picks and chooses
4. It has a supreme example in Jesus (vs. 15)

Conclusion

Our Lord's words are not so much a commandment as a tender declaration. It is a promise for sure, but it is more.

The lesson here is quite clear. All of God's people are to embrace and lead in the role of servants.

But how?

1. Care for the poor
2. Care for the lame, the broken, those who suffer.
3. By not taking or insisting on first place, prominence.
4. By seeking to restore those who fall, or who are wayward.

D.L. Moody said, "The measure of a man is not how many servants he has, but how many men he serves."

We have been "sent."

Remember, our Lord was sent and it is He who sends us.

Lorne Sanny was once asked how you can know if you have a “servant attitude?” He answered, “By how you act when you are treated like one.”