

May 30/31, 2020

Happy Are the Feet Washers
These Things are Written that You May Believe Series
John 13:1-20
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So let's imagine that you knew for certain that you were going to die the next day, and you've gathered around you the people that mean the most to you. You have a few hours to share your last thoughts or teachings or whatever before you die. What would you say? What would you share with them?

That's basically the situation we find with Jesus. As He's now gathered with His leadership team—His disciples—the assignment is going to be to change the world, and in less than twenty-four hours, He's going to give His life on the cross. So, these are significant words to prepare His leadership team for the assignment that's coming. That's what we want to talk about today.

If you have a Bible, turn with us to the Gospel of John. Continuing our study, we find ourselves in chapter 13. So again, Bible scholars divide the Gospel of John into three parts, basically. They're not equal parts. You have the *Prologue*, which is chapter 1, verse 1, through verse 18. And then starting in chapter 1, verse 19, through chapter 12, is called the *Book of Signs*. And then starting in chapter 13, verse 1, to the end of the book, is called the *Book of Glory*. It's basically the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus—the fulfillment of the promise. So that's where we find ourselves, and we begin at chapter 13, verse 1:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, (*NASB, John 13:1a)

Now I just want to go that far and talk a little bit about some timing issues. Some of you are aware of the fact there's disagreement among scholars as to when exactly Jesus was crucified. The traditional view is Friday, and I think that's probably correct. Others think it might have been Wednesday, and there are a few that think it could have been Thursday. It doesn't change the theology of what transpired at all, but it does go a little bit to the credibility of the gospel record and the historians. So if you take the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—and you put the story together, it seems very clear that Jesus died on Friday, which means the events of chapter 13 would have been Thursday evening, and then Jesus rose from the dead, which all scholars agree was on Sunday. But once you introduce the Gospel of John into that discussion, there are a handful of verses that call into question exactly the timetable, and it depends upon how you interpret those. Chapter 13, verse 1, is the first one of those, and then as others arise, we'll just take them as they come in studies that are upcoming.

So chapter 13, verse 1: If you take it that everything that happens in chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were before the Passover, then that moves it back to a timeline that seems out of sync with the Synoptic Gospels. But there's really no reason to take chapter 13 verse 1 that way. I think the best way to understand it is in chapter 12, verse 1, John tells us there are six days before the Passover, and now it's the day before the Passover, so this would be Thursday evening. And so he's simply providing a summary of the Book of Signs, what has taken place, and sets the table for the discussion to follow. I think that's the best way to understand it. So, if you take out the chapter divisions and the verse divisions that weren't actually part of the original text—they're just put in there by editors—and you see chapter 13 verse 1 as simply kind of the hinge that transitions into what's to follow, then I think the timetable syncs up with the Synoptic Gospels just fine. So John says:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. (Chapter 13:1)

So basically what John is doing is closing the Book of Signs. He told us in chapter 12, verse 23: *“The hour has come.”* It's time now for Jesus to go to the cross to fulfill the mission. So He reminds us that it's time for Jesus to depart out of this world to the Father, to complete His mission and return to the Father—His ascension and glorification. And He tells us that He has **loved His own who were in the world**. This term **world** is a word that John is going to use over forty times in the next few chapters, so it's a really important concept. Basically, he's talking about the *world of people*. We learned in chapter 1 that, *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.”*

That's those who believe in His name. So, there's the **world** and then out of that there are those who believe and those become His own. And Jesus has loved them, and now it's the final few hours to pour into them the things they need to know before the crucifixion. So that's what He's saying—He has **loved them to the end**. That word **end** can mean to the *outermost*. It's to love them completely or fully. But I think it's more than that. The Greek word translated there is the same root word as the word that Jesus uttered on the cross that's usually translated, “It is finished”. It's the word *“Tetelestai,”* which is the participle form, which is what Jesus said on the cross. This is the noun form in chapter 13 verse 1, so it's *“to the finish”*; it's *“to the finish line”*. Jesus loved them all the way to the cross to pay the debt, which is a little bit of a hint of what this particular story is going to reflect. So, Jesus has loved them; He will love them all the way to the finish line—to the cross. And that's the hinge into this very intimate time with His disciples in the upper room for their final instructions. Verse 2:

During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. (Vs. 2-4)

So verse 2 could be translated instead of **during supper**, to **as they were serving supper**, which is how the NIV has it. I think that's better. So, as they began to serve, then Jesus is going to get up and wash the disciples' feet. John makes sure we know that He knows—Jesus knows—that Judas is going to betray Him. We're reminded that this is a cosmic war, that the devil is involved. He puts into Judas' heart to betray Jesus. He has no idea that within the next twenty-four hours the devil himself will be defeated. His head will be crushed, and he will be cast out once and for all. So this is kind of this cosmic war that's going on playing out here.

Verse 3 is the reminder that Jesus has come from the Father. He's come into the world. It's time to complete the assignment. That will be the cross, and then He will ascend back to the Father for His glorification. So His time on earth is about over and that's what John is reflecting there.

In verse 4, when it says **He got up and laid aside His garments, and taking a towel**, I think John's very, very careful with his wording there. The Greek for *laying aside or laying down His garments*, (we're talking about like an outer robe that would have been taken off in order to do this task, and then there's an under robe that they would have worn), but the language *“laid down”* or *“laid aside”* is the exact same language that Jesus has used, for example, in John 10 for *“laying down”* or *“laying aside”* His life. So He's going to *lay down His life*. He's going to *take it up again*, and that language

is used here as kind of a metaphor. He's going to *lay down His robe*; He's going to demonstrate for them what He's about to do, and then He's going to *take it up again*. So John's language is very careful there. Verse 5:

Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

So they didn't sit at a table like we do. They reclined usually on their left elbows, so everybody's feet are obvious. And the fact that nobody washed feet would be quite evident. But to really understand what's happening here, you have to understand first century Near East culture. As people would walk through the streets, their feet would get dusty and needed to be washed. But this was considered a very lowly task. So oftentimes people would wash their own feet because nobody else is going to do it for them. Sometimes a host would wash feet, but typically only if it was someone coming in that was superior, and the host would take the role of washing that person's feet, never for someone who's considered to be less than, or inferior. It was such a lowly task that it was something reserved for a slave, but the law even stated that a Jewish slave was not required to wash feet. It was even below the dignity of a Jewish slave, so only a Gentile slave could be ordered to wash feet. So if you remember all the way back to John chapter 1, when John the Baptist is talking about Jesus as, "*the One who comes after me*," when he says, "I'm not even fit to untie His sandals," that's what he was reflecting. This is the lowest job imaginable. So when John would say, "I'm not even fit for that," you get a sense of, culturally, how low that responsibility was, to really understand what's happening here.

So Jesus gets up and starts to wash feet, and you'd have to imagine that these men were shocked! They were confused. Perhaps they were shamed. Perhaps they were starting to think, "We should have done that," but maybe just thinking, "We should have at least washed Jesus' feet. I doubt there was any interest in washing one another's feet. We know from the Gospel of Luke that, actually at this point, they're arguing about who's the greatest in the kingdom. So, if you're arguing about who's the greatest in the kingdom, you're not going to disqualify yourself by stooping to wash somebody else's feet. So that's the climate, and Jesus steps up to wash their feet, and I'm guessing you could have heard a pin drop at this moment.

So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" (Vs. 6)

So Peter is getting this. This is so out-of-order. This is so against the social norms. This is so not right that it's hard to blame Peter for struggling with this. There's no way Jesus should be washing Peter's feet, so he reacts to it pretty strongly.

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter said to Him, "Never, never shall You wash my feet!"
(Vs. 7-8a)

So Jesus responds and tells Peter he is not really going to get this until later, which is a really helpful hint that this isn't just about washing feet. Peter got that, but Jesus is wanting to communicate something much deeper and more significant that won't make sense to Peter and the others until after the crucifixion and the resurrection. That's what Jesus is saying. But Peter can't process this. Peter's, "No," is actually a double negative. "Never, never (he's very emphatic) shall you wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (Vs. 8b)

Jesus' words seem unusually stern to Peter. "Peter, if I don't wash your feet, you're off the team," and it's like, "Why did Jesus react so strongly?" Well, Jesus doesn't say, "Peter, if somebody doesn't wash your feet, you've got to go. You know, your feet stink." It wasn't that at all. The emphatic is, "Peter, *if I* don't wash your feet." So, on one hand, it's not hard to understand why Peter was so confused by this. This was so contrary to what was right and good and fitting. But there is also a pride in Peter, where he's thinking, "I should be washing Your feet. You shouldn't be washing my feet; I'll wash my own feet." And what Peter is reflecting is the attitude of the religious leaders and the religious people that are unwilling to accept the fact that their only way to be cleansed is through Jesus. That's what Jesus meant when He said, "Peter, you're not going to understand this till later. The only hope you have to be cleansed of your sin is Me, and I'm going to go to the cross and I'm going to do it for you. You can't do it for yourself. And you have to, in humility and brokenness, accept that I'm the only One that can do this for you. I have to wash your feet." That's essentially what's happening here, and that's why Jesus says that. Jesus has taught them He's the gate; He's the door; He's the only way to the Father and, "If I don't cleanse you, you won't be cleansed." That's what Jesus is saying.

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all *of you*. For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason, He said, "Not all of you are clean." (Vs. 9-11)

So in Peter fashion then, he kind of overreacts again. "*And if that's true, then wash my hands, wash my face. I mean, give me a bath.*" That's essentially what Peter was saying. Now in this culture, before Passover feasts, which this was, they would have taken a bath before they gathered together. So Jesus is tapping into that you only need your feet washed, but He's saying much more than that. He's saying that these disciples are His own. They have believed. They are His children. They have been cleansed. So all they need is to have the dust washed off their feet. Essentially what Jesus was saying is that these are His children, and He's about to teach them and instruct them and prepare them for their assignment after His death, burial, and resurrection. They don't need to be saved again. They don't need to be re-cleansed, but they're going to have to constantly learn and grow. We'd call it discipleship or sanctification, and so they're in a process where they need to keep learning and growing to faithfully obey and fulfill the assignment. But Jesus then takes this opportunity to identify that they're clean, which helps us know that our interpretation of what Jesus is doing is correct. What He's saying is that they have believed; they are His own. They're clean, but not all of them. There is one that's going to betray Him, and Jesus knows that. So this is the second time the text has told us that. It's really important to John that we know that. Verse 12:

So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments (So "taken back" or "taken up" is the language) and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you should do is I did to you." (Vs. 12-15)

So Jesus puts His outer robe back on. Again you have that language that "He laid it down," and, "He took it back up," which is the language He's used. He's going to lay down His life; He's going to take it back up again. So He's capturing the imagery that the foot washing is just a picture of something more, something deeper. That is why He asked them. "*Do you understand what I just did?*" Now the obvious answer would be, "Yes, we didn't wash feet because we were arguing; so You washed our feet." But of course, Jesus has something much more in mind. He says, "**You call Me Teacher (or Rabbi) and Lord.**" That word for **Lord** can mean *deity*. It doesn't have to. It certainly would mean

like, *master*. So, “You call Me Teacher and Master,” and Jesus says, “That's right, you should call Me that. That's who I am. So if I, as your Master and Teacher wash your feet, then you ought to wash one another's feet. If I did this for you, I expect you to do this for others.” Now I think the disciples would have been more than willing to wash Jesus' feet. But that's not what He said. He didn't say, “I washed your feet; you wash Mine.” He said, “I washed your feet; I expect you then to wash one another's feet.” He's very clear. He gave them an example to follow. Verse 16:

“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.”

Verse 16 is very interesting because, at first it's like, “Well, that's pretty obvious. A slave is not greater than his master.” It's like everybody in the room knows that. But what is Jesus saying? Jesus is saying that if you're unwilling to sacrifice, to wash one another's feet after I have washed your feet, then you're saying, as the slave, you must think you're greater than the master. Jesus was willing to stoop to do this for them, but for some reason, they're so much greater, that they're not willing to stoop and do the same for others. So the idea is, “If you're unwilling to sacrifice, to serve, to wash the feet of someone else, then what you're saying is even though Jesus died for them, and sacrificed for them, for some reason, I must be yet greater than Jesus because it's beneath me to do such work to someone like that. It's a very powerful moment. Then verse 17:

“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”

That word **blessed** is the Greek word that means *happy*. So verse 17 is really interesting. Jesus is saying what He said before. “You have to die to live. You have to be willing to lay down your life in order to find it. That life is not found in being selfish. It's not found in demanding your own way. It's not found in how many servants you have. It's found in how many you serve.” So Jesus is saying, “If you know this and do it, that's where you're going to find happiness. That's where you're going to find the life that your soul longs for.” Jesus is going to call these men, on the basis of what Jesus has done for them, to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the gospel. And what He says is, “This is where you're going to find your joy. This is where you're going to find your happiness. This is where you're going to find the life that your soul is searching for.”

It's interesting, because that's not how we think as a culture. The reason we're selfish, the reason we're self-centered, the reason we think so much about ourselves and having our way and demanding our way, is we think somehow that's going to make me happy. As long as I look out for number one, somehow that's going to make me happy. But it doesn't make me happy. It's counterintuitive. Jesus says you have to die to live. You have to give up your life to find it. You have to follow the example of Jesus. This is what He did for you; this is what He expects you to do for others, and there you will find the life that you're searching for. Verse 18:

“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but *it is* that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.’ From now on I am telling you before *it* comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am *He*.” (Vs. 18-19)

So for the third time, John is identifying that Jesus knows Judas is planning to betray Him. Now the word **chosen** there again is not speaking of election. Don't read that into this. It's as simple as He chose these twelve men, knowing one of them would be a betrayer. He knew that. It would be a fulfillment of prophecy from Psalm 41 verse 9, where Ahithophel betrays David and eventually goes

out and hangs himself. He's kind of like a Judas figure to David. And Judas now is the fulfillment of that, as he will betray Jesus. Verse 19, the reason Jesus is telling them this, is so that they won't panic and think that Judas has ruined the plan, and now the cross was not the intent because the plan is all falling apart. You can imagine, if you're not sure what Jesus is doing, all of a sudden one of your own betrays Him and that ends up with the arrest and the crucifixion, it could seem like the plan all fell apart. So Jesus is saying, "I want you to know, I know this. I know what's going to happen. It's part of the plan. It was prophesied, and I'm going to tell you ahead of time so when it happens, you will **believe.**" The original text says **that I am**. The *He* should be in italics, which is added. It's better without. Jesus is saying, what He has said before, like in John 8. "You will know that *I am.*" He is saying, "I am the **I am** that spoke to Moses out of the burning bush." We learned that Jesus is the Lord Almighty from Isaiah's vision. Jesus is again identified, "*I am*". I am the one true eternal God of the universe, and you will know that. Verse 20:

"Truly, truly I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

So what Jesus is saying is that He is about to give them their commission. Jesus is going to die. He is going to be buried. He is going to rise from the dead, and He is going to give them their assignment. Their assignment is to change the world. It's to take the message of the gospel to the world, and the assignment will be, as Jesus has sacrificed for them, He is expecting them to sacrifice for others. They're going to be asked to wash the feet of people who will revile them, who will reject them, who will imprison them, who ultimately will kill them for the sake of the gospel. So, "I'm going to send you out, and those who receive you—meaning they listen and believe—then they receive Me, then they receive the Father. So this is the beginning of what will be the *Great Commission*, and Jesus will talk more about that in the next several passages.

So that's as far as we're going to go this week. But I want to take a little bit of time and talk about what is the relevance of this text to our lives today. Jesus was asking these disciples to give their lives for the sake of others, symbolically to wash their feet. Just as Jesus would sacrifice for them, He's expecting them to sacrifice for others, all the way to giving their lives for the sake of the gospel. These are the final hours of training before Jesus is to be crucified, and they are going to be sent out.

So what is the relevance to us today? We don't really live in a feet-washing culture, and that isn't really the point. The point is the call to serve others, the call to sacrifice for others. As Jesus has done for us, so we are to do for others. Now my experience has been, over the years, that all of us have people in our lives that we're willing to do that for. And sometimes we get kind of self-righteous around, "Yeah, Oh sure. I'll do that," because there's this demographic of people that I would gladly sacrifice for, and serve, and love, and take care of. But there are also people in our world where we're more likely to think, "Ah, I don't think so," and that's the more difficult assignment. Some of this is generational, and what I mean by that is each generation has certain demographics of people that they're willing to serve, to wash their feet, that they kind of feel like everybody else has forgotten. "Look at us." But those same people turn right back around and there are people that they despise. There are people that they dislike; there are people that they criticize and put down all the time. Every generation has those. Just like we as individuals have certain people where it'd be very difficult to wash their feet. Maybe it's somebody that disagrees with you politically. Maybe it's somebody that disagrees with you on social issues. Maybe it's somebody that has a different understanding of social justice and what's right and wrong with the world. Maybe it's just somebody that has different values from you. We all have people in our world that are very difficult for us to humble ourselves, and to serve, and to wash their feet as representatives of the gospel. So I really would challenge all of us not

to just think, “Oh, I do that. Yeah, I'll wash those people's feet.” It's worth thinking about. Who are those people that, for me, are very difficult to love, and am I willing to wash their feet? What Jesus just said is if you're not, and for some reason you think the slave is greater than the master, even though Jesus died for them, somehow I'm above that, so I can't lower myself to do for them what Jesus did for me.

So let's squeeze this down a little bit more, and I want to talk about how this relates to life in this pandemic. One of the things that's become extremely concerning is how divisive this issue has been among people. There is a good chance that the division caused by people's opinions about all this is going to do far more damage than the virus itself, and so we need to think about some of these things. So, what do we know? One thing we know is there are a lot of opinions. I have my opinion; you have your opinion. We all have opinions about what this is and how to respond. So there's no question there are lots of opinions.

Second of all, we know there is a mountain of misinformation. There is so much misinformation about this, that it makes it very challenging to know what's true. What happens is people have opinions; they get on the internet; they find doctors; they find research; they find studies; they find scientists that agree with their opinion. Then they say, “Look, it's right here.” But with a little bit of searching, it's very obvious the doctors don't agree. The scientists don't agree. The researchers don't agree. There is no agreement. There are as many opinions by the experts as there are opinions of the general population, which again makes it very difficult to sort out and figure out what's actually true. I know people like to quote the World Health Organization or the CDC. Some people seem to believe those organizations far more than they believe their own Bible. But the record is that they have missed on this on their predictions, on the models, on what's happening, again and again. They're humans. They're trying to figure this out, but it's a mess. There's a ton of misinformation, and it's very difficult to figure out what's true.

The third level of this is there's no question the media has, in my opinion, intentionally created a culture of fear. Fear is good for getting people to tune back in, and getting people to tune back in is good for ratings. So the media has created this culture of fear where people are terrified, and fear doesn't lead to reasonable thinking. Fear doesn't lead to flourishing. It's just contributed to the division and the conflict among people. I am constantly concerned about how influenced and manipulated people are by the media, and they just feed on these media outlets. We know for sure that the media is more likely to push an agenda than to tell the truth. And at some point, we have to recognize that what we're hearing may not actually be the truth.

All this leads to people having very strong opinions. Among the people in our community there would be lots of opinions. Within our congregation, there are lots of opinions. Within our staff, there are a lot of opinions. Even within families, there is a great diversity of opinions. So that's fine. Everybody's entitled to their opinion, with the freedom to do what you think is best based on your conclusions. There's nothing wrong with that. The problem is when you're determined to force your opinion on everybody else. And if everybody else doesn't see it exactly the way you see it, then they're wrong. What's happened in this culture is there's been this narrative that's been created to such a degree that if you don't fall in line with the narrative, you have a different opinion, “You're bad!” “You're evil!” “You're a hate monger.” “You don't love your neighbors.” “You're selfish.” “You're irresponsible!” You just don't have permission to disagree. And all this creates this divisive spirit that's going to do significant damage. I know people want to say this isn't driven by fear, but for a lot of people it is far more than not. People say, “Well, this is what's true, and therefore this is what I'm doing for my neighbor. You know, this is so my neighbor doesn't get sick.” So to sort of run contrary to that is

unkind. “It's not loving my neighbor; it's immoral.” And so we wrap it all up in these moralistic terms—that, “My way is right, and if you disagree with me, you're not just wrong, you're morally wrong.” And so we say, “Well, this is my opinion, and I'm doing this because I love my neighbor.” I would suggest, “No, you're doing that because you're determined to force your neighbor to have your opinion. If your neighbor doesn't see it your way, then you're going to say they're immoral, they're unloving, they're unkind.” So what has to happen is you have the freedom to have your opinion, your conclusions, to live your life consistent with that. But you have to allow others the freedom to disagree with that, to have a different conclusion, to have a different opinion. They need to have the same freedom to have their opinion as you have.

One of the things that has happened in our culture is that, as a result of the reactions to this virus, we are destroying thousands upon thousands and thousands of lives. It's destroying people economically; it's destroying people socially; it's destroying people emotionally. The statistics are showing that addictions are on the rise; domestic abuse is on the rise; mental health issues are on the rise; financial collapse is on the rise. I think it may be years before we sort out all the damage we're doing to people. And when people say, “This is how I love my neighbor,” part of the consideration is, “But these people whose lives are being destroyed by this, they're also my neighbor. And shouldn't they also matter, and shouldn't I also love them?” Which is part of what makes this so complicated and trying to figure out, “What's the right thing to do?”

One of the things that's happened is, as a result of the media and the focus of TV commercials and all this information, is we have got this tunnel vision thing going where we seem to think the only problem in the world today is the virus and if I just don't get sick—like that's going to solve the world's problems! But in getting such a strong case of tunnel vision, we're failing to see the bigger picture and what's happening and devastating people's lives. We have to realize there are far more problems in the world than just a virus. And honestly, the virus isn't even the biggest concern in the world.

We've been reminded this week through the events in Minneapolis that racism is alive and well. This is a huge problem! It was there long before the virus. It will be there long after the virus. The only hope for racism, for correcting this, is the hope of the gospel—that Jesus changes people's hearts and we realize no matter what the color of your skin is, you stand equal and right before God through the gospel. That's the only hope we have!

You know, while we're worried about the virus, which is a legitimate concern, do we understand that 25,000 people a day, most of them children, die of starvation? Every single day! This has been a problem long before the virus. It will be a problem long after the virus. According to experts, because of how we've reacted—not because of the virus but because of how we reacted to the virus—it is likely that the number of people, mostly children, that will starve to death in the world will skyrocket. While we are burying millions of pounds of pork in the ground, children are starving to death around the world. We have to realize something's all messed up about this. There are problems in the world far beyond just the virus and getting sick. So part of what we have to figure out is, “What is the right response?” And it's confusing.

So now we're back. You have your opinion; I have my opinion. Probably everybody listening has some version of that—but a lot of different opinions. Is it possible that God is calling us to wash the feet of those who have opinions that differ from ours? Aren't these all people that Jesus died for? Aren't these all people that Jesus sacrificed for? Aren't they all people that matter to Jesus? And maybe my way of sacrificing, maybe my way of washing feet, is to realize I'm free to hold my own opinion, but I can't force everyone else to have the same opinion. It's okay if some people see it differently.

As we begin to come together as a community, we come together in businesses and schools, certainly as we come together in churches, one of the big challenges is going to be how divisive this issue has become. We may get past the virus but not recover from the division because of the conflict of what's happening out there. And so it does raise the question, "Who's going to lead the way back?" And I would suggest to you, "Wouldn't that be the church? And if it's the church, why not us? Why not demonstrate to the community that we can have a diversity of opinions, but we're called to something higher than everybody demanding their own way?" If everybody's going to say, "It has to be according to my opinion, or I'm going to take my toys and go home," there's no chance for coming together. There's no way to ever come back together in unity. We're all going to have to sacrifice. I'm free to hold my opinion. I'm free to take whatever steps I think are necessary to live consistently with that opinion. But I can't force everyone else to see it my way. There's going to be a diversity of opinion, but isn't it possible we can rise above that? Isn't it possible we can love one another, and wash one another's feet, and realize there's something greater we're called to, and come together as the body of Christ to be stewards of the gospel, to get the message out there that the world needs to hear? We're going to have to put aside our fears and our strong opinions in order to once again create a community that is flourishing. That is our witness—that this is the way back. The only way that's going to happen is if we come together and agree, "This is what Jesus did for us, so we're willing to sacrifice for others; we're willing to have the courage to take some steps of faith, to take some risk, to rise above the need to have our own way, and to come together and love and serve one another, to wash one another's feet, and to be the church, and lead the way back to becoming a community that's flourishing together again."

The disciples were called to give their lives and to wash the feet of those who would revile them, those who would reject them, those who would imprison them and those who would ultimately execute them. And they did! They faithfully obeyed all the way to the finish line!

So what about us? Are we, too, willing to wash the feet of the people around us and move past this division that's going to destroy people, and come together as the body of Christ? Remember, Jesus said, "*If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.*"

Our Father, we're thankful that You challenge us with things that are not easy, that we would follow Jesus' example. As Jesus died for us, He's called us to sacrifice for others. Lord, may we be willing to wash the feet of people we disagree with for the sake of the gospel, that we might come together and once again be Your church, and lead the way back to a community that flourishes together. Give us the courage to be obedient. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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May 30/31, 2020

Happy Are the Feet Washers

That You May Believe

John 13:1-20

Pastor Bryan Clark

1) When you think about what it means to be a humble person, what qualities come to mind?

→ **Who is someone you know that exemplifies humility and what does that look like?**

→ **Who is someone you know that exemplifies humility and what does that look like?**

2) In verse 3 we're told that Jesus decided to wash the feet of His disciples to identify His close relationship with the Father. He knew where He came from, where He was going and the authority He had been given.

→ **On a scale of 1-10 how closely do you identify yourself with God?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1 = not sure where I stand with God // 10 = confident as a Child of God)

→ **How did you decide on the number you chose on the scale?**

3) When Jesus laid aside His outer garment to take up a towel, He became a living metaphor of humility, breaking accepted roles of what it meant to be a leader.

→ **Read Philippians 2:5-8 and discuss other examples when Jesus took on a humble position (human birth, life and death).**

→ When do you notice that, for Jesus, humility and love go hand-in-hand?

4) In verse 17, Jesus says “you are blessed” or happy if you follow the example of humble, servant leadership He expressed in washing the feet of His disciples.

→ How does that kind of leadership run counter to our current culture?

5) In this passage, John wants us to notice how Jesus relates to two disciples in particular – Peter who was concerned with position and Judas who was weighing betrayal. Knowing their hearts, Jesus still offered both of them His humble service and attention.

→ If you were in that room, how might you have responded to Jesus’ lavish love?

→ Knowing the acceptance and love of Jesus, how could you go about serving others this week?