

Love So Humble and Enduring

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 13:1-17
Preached on: Sunday, February 8, 2015

We come once again to John's Gospel and we find ourselves in chapter 13. So if you will take your Bibles and turn there, I would like to read the passage that we will be examining here this morning, John 13:1-17. Follow along as I read,

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, 3 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, 4 rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. 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. 6 So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter." 8 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head." 10 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." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." 12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Jesus' public ministry is now over so John now reveals to us some of the intimate details regarding Jesus' ministry to his disciples, his private ministry. As we know, he has abandoned Israel because of their rejection of him and now he gives himself to the few who have received him. Here Jesus illustrates the purpose of his first coming which was to humble himself as a servant and provide the perfect and the final sacrifice for sin, a once-for-all cleansing known as justification. He also illustrates in this text the great doctrine of sanctification, especially as it relates to every believer's need for a daily cleansing from the defiling filth of sin that can interrupt sweet fellowship with the lover of our soul; that can cause us to forfeit blessing and even eternal reward and even bring

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us into the woodshed of divine chastening. But the most important lesson that Jesus wants his disciples to learn through his words and actions is one that they struggled with the most; one that you struggle with the most; one that I struggle with the most; one that goes against the grain of our very nature and that is: the lesson of humble love that's validated by selfless sacrifice where we prefer other's interest over our own. Friends, if you are not deeply convicted by what you hear today, there is something dreadfully wrong with your heart. It has probably been seriously calloused by pride. None of us love as we should, but none of us love as we could.

So in light of this brief summary, it's going to be important that we not only look at the theological truths here illustrated but also the practical lesson that the Lord teaches us and tells us that if we do these things he will bless us. Perhaps 4 categories of thought will prove helpful to us as together we behold our Savior's love so humble and enduring as I have entitled my discourse to you. We are going to look at 4 things. Number 1: his infinite love. Secondly, his incomprehensible condescension. And flowing out of that we will see, number 3: his impassioned example. And hopefully from all of this, we will learn, number 4: our imperative responsibility.

We must understand the context, once again, in order to fully grasp all that is going on here. A few days earlier, Jesus has entered into Jerusalem to the hosannas of a couple of million excited, exuberant Israelites. He has presented himself to them as their Messiah King. He has then gone in and cleansed the temple and then taken possession of it to determine if the nation would truly receive him on his terms rather than there's. Of course, the answer was no. They rejected him. They refused to see who he really was. And in chapter 12, we see they were not believing in him though he performed so many signs before them. So we learned that he hardened their hearts so they couldn't believe in him which was really an act of judgment that was a part of God's sovereign plan all along as John makes clear in chapter 12.

Though he warned them to "walk while you will have the light so that darkness will not overtake you," they refused the light and now the darkness has overtaken them. So in verse 36 of chapter 12 we read that "he departed and hid himself from them" which is a solemn illustration of the judicial warning that he had just pronounced. Even as the visible presence of Jehovah, the Shekinah glory of God, once left the temple precincts some 600 years earlier as Ezekiel records, once again, the presence of the glory of God in the person of the Messianic King leaves the temple and he hides himself from them. But now in stark contrast, he reveals even more of himself to his disciples in this most intimate scene in which he celebrates the last divinely sanctioned Passover meal with them on the night before his crucifixion. Here he will use the elements and symbolism of this meal to illustrate the transition between the old covenant Passover that ultimately

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pointed to him, the Lamb of God, to the new covenant of the Lord's Supper which not only commemorates his death but anticipates his return.

It's important for us to understand what was going on in the hearts of the disciples. As we have studied the Gospel accounts, we see that although Jesus continued to speak about his impending death, the disciples just could not come to grips with it. They were preoccupied with the kingdom and who was going to be greatest in the kingdom. There was an ongoing undercurrent of rivalry building among the 12 disciples. It's fascinating, although Jesus had preached on humility, for example in Matthew 18. We learn in Matthew 20 that James and John and their mother came and asked Jesus for a place of prominence in the kingdom, that one would sit on the right hand and one would sit on the left. Sadly, ambitious pride was therefore a recurring theme among the disciples and in this Upper Room scenario, it's going to be exposed in a dramatic way by Jesus washing their feet and then even more profoundly when he goes to the cross the next day.

Also, be aware that Jesus knew fully what was going on in the heart of Judas. He knew that arrangements had already been made for his betrayal. Nevertheless, Jesus showed love even toward his enemy by washing his feet along with the others. It's also important to bear in mind that although Jesus knew the inconceivable tortures that awaited him, he knew of his suffering and his death, he knew that that hour had come, nevertheless his focus was on those who the Father had given to him, not on himself. So dear friends, herein is our example of a love so humble and enduring.

Let's look at the text in verse 1. John first tells us, "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." Let's pause there for a moment. It's interesting in John 1:10 we read that he made "the world" but now he begins to talk more and more as we see in the Gospel record about "this world." This world, one that has been made by Satan in sin. This world of sin that he hates and will judge. In John 9:39, we read, "For judgment I came into this world." In chapter 12, verse 25, "He who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal." Then in verse 31, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." And so forth.

But then as we come back to verse 1, John says, "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Here, my friends, we see number 1: his infinite love. You will recall that an amazing picture of redemption was partially painted at the first Passover in Egypt when innocent blood was splashed upon the doorpost of those who trusted in Yahweh for deliverance and now that masterpiece is about to be finished when innocent blood would be spilt upon a cross and applied to all who placed their trust in Christ Jesus as Savior. As we come to this scene, I find myself being gripped with what

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must have been going on in the heart and the mind of our blessed Savior. I cannot imagine the anguish of heart that he must have been experiencing. His hour had come to depart, he tells us, and certainly he longed to return to the Father to enjoy the majesty that was rightfully his but, dear friends, his anticipation of such a glorious reunion in no way mitigated the pain that he was experiencing deep within his soul. You will recall in chapter 12, verse 27, he said, "My soul has become troubled," which means that he literally trembled with acute mental and spiritual anguish as he contemplated having to drink the bitter cup of the Father's wrath on behalf of sinners. And because of the grammar of that text, we know that this was a chronic condition that plagued him. Yet despite the horrors that awaited him, I find it inconceivable that his focus was not on himself but on those the Father had given him in eternity past as he says in John 10:29.

"Having loved his own who are in the world, he loved them to the end." You know, I find such comfort in this text, I hope you do as well. What an infinite love he has for his own, those chosen by the Father to be the bride of his Son. Those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, of the earth, before he created anything. Those for whom he came to die specifically. In John 15:19, Jesus says that the world loves its own but, "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Some might ask, "Well, doesn't that contradict John 3:16? There we read that God so loved the world." No, none of this contradicts that. Not at all. God does love the world, meaning fallen humanity, but only in a temporal, not in an eternal way. Not in a saving way. You say, "How so? How does he love the world in that way?" Well, through what we would call common grace that he bestows on undeserving sinners who will never come to salvation. To some degree as we look at the world around us, as we look at Scripture we see that God literally protects and delivers and even sustains the lives of the most vile people on the planet. The very fact that the proclamation of the Gospel is given to those who will refuse it is a demonstration of his love for the world. We know according to Scripture that God does not delight in the condemnation and the death of any of his creatures. The Psalmist tells us in a number of places that God is compassionate and gracious. Routinely in Scripture we read how he is slow to anger. Peter says that, "He is patient," the idea of patient in bringing judgment, "not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." Think about this: before he unleashed the waters of judgment upon the world in the days of Noah due to unimaginable wickedness, he withheld his hand of judgment upon all humanity for 120 years so that they could hear his warnings through his servant Noah.

The evil in the world today is no different and yet God continues to be long-suffering. He continues to wait. That God loves sinners in the world who will never believe is demonstrated by his mercy, the mercy that he grants them by withholding instant death and judgment when they sin. We read in Romans 9:22 that he "endures with much

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patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." In Acts 14:17, we read that he does "good and gives them rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying their hearts with food and gladness." And in Matthew 5:45, we read that, "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." In fact, Paul even tells us in 1 Timothy 4:10 that God is "the Savior of all men, especially believers." Now obviously, he doesn't save all men eternally otherwise all men would be in heaven and there would be no need for hell and we know that's not accurate. That's the heresy of universalism. So what he's saying here, especially with that little adverb "especially," he's the Savior of all men, especially of believers. "Especially" indicates that all men enjoy some measure of the same salvation as believers therefore he is the Savior of unbelievers in a temporal sense as I've just described to you but believers in an eternal sense. Unlike unbelievers who belong to this world system ruled by Satan, believers are delivered from sin's penalty and power and even presence for eternity. He will love them to the uttermost, to the very end. We see this principle illustrated in Isaiah 63, beginning in verse 8. Isaiah says, "For God said, 'Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely.' So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them."

So again, John says, "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end," a Greek phrase that basically means "to the uttermost." This of course, is in contrast to his temporal love for unbelievers. God's love for the world, you might say, is unlimited in extent but limited in degree. It is not a saving love. The opposite is true for believers. God's love for his own is limited in extent but it is unlimited in degree. Indeed, he loves his own to the uttermost. Now, you must understand that he has always loved his own, even in eternity past, but he is about to show us the full extent of his love which is going to first be displayed in the self-abasing washing of the disciples' feet and then we will see it even more in his farewell address, his high priestly prayer in the garden of Gethsemane all of which form a beautiful prelude to his most comprehensive act of love which is his sacrificial death on the cross.

So Jesus will now pour his life into 12 men knowing that one of them would betray him. With no thought of himself, he is going to compassionately minister to them to try to strengthen and encourage them, to prepare them for the ordeal that they are about to face in his death as well as the difficulties in their subsequent ministries. So here we see, number 2: his incomprehensible condescension. But what John records next provides a chilling contrast to the infinite love of Christ for his own. If you've ever gone to a jewelry store and they showed you a diamond, you notice that they always put it on something like a black velvet. I'm not sure that's what it is but that's how I would describe it. So that

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you have the contrast and the light shows in the diamond and you see the brilliance. Well dear friends, what we are about to read in this next verse is the black velvet. Here we see the inveterate hatred of Satan who has empowered Judas.

So let's notice verse 2 which, by the way, is the beginning of a long sentence. "During supper," which means as we're going to see, it's at the early part of the Passover meal which takes a couple of hours due to the various stages. "During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him." Let's stop there for a moment. Think about this: Judas lived with Jesus. He was able to see the light of the world like few others and yet he chose the darkness. It's a frightening thing. I've seen this even in our own church, people who are constantly exposed to the light of the Gospel. They can look around and see radically transformed lives and yet they don't want any part of it. They prefer the darkness.

Hoping to cash in on the kingdom, Judas was motivated by greedy materialism, by power and prestige. You might say that he was a pioneer of the heretical prosperity Gospel. Knowing this, Satan continued to lay snares in the well-worn paths of Judas's wicked passions. So what's going on now is there is a conspiracy of unimaginable evil between Satan and Judas and the religious leaders and Jesus is fully aware of all of this yet Jesus shows Judas the same loving grace and selfless love as he did to all of the others, a stunning example of what it means to love our enemies, right? And to love those who love this world and hate Christ.

Verse 3, "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." In other words, this is what was in his mind. Knowing all of this, knowing the outcome of his atoning work and his glorious ascension back to the right hand of the Father, nevertheless despite the inexpressible glory of his person and of his work wherein he could have legitimately exalted himself, notice what he does. Verse 4, "He got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself." Unbelievable.

It was common for mealtimes to be teaching times and this would be a lesson they would never forget. We must understand the culture because it is so foreign to us to understand what was really going on here. Feet in those days were always dirty. In fact, if you go to third world countries, you will see that, filthy feet. And it was customary for every host to have a slave to wash the feet of every guest that entered into their house. This was a sign of hospitality. It might be tantamount to us saying to, I don't know, farmhands that would come in to eat lunch, "Hey, why don't you guys go in there and wash up?" But it was also a matter of personal hygiene, especially when eating because they would lay upon the floor when they would eat and they would have pillows that they would recline upon in

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kind of individual coaches and dirty feet would kind of go to the outside but it would be very unappetizing. However, we must understand that the one that would do the washing was always the lowliest slave, never a Rabbi. But this was a rented room so there's no slave and remember, the disciples are bickering amongst each other so you're not going to have any of the disciples saying, "Oh here, come over here, I'll be glad to wash your feet." That's just not going to happen.

So they're making preparations to eat with dirty feet expecting someone else to do it or just don't do it at all. Also, it's important for us to understand as I said earlier that the Passover meal takes several hours because it consists of various stages filled with symbolism and conversation. Some of you have been a part of our Passover Seder that we've done here and we know that after the opening prayer, they would pass out the first of 4 cups of diluted wine known as the cup of blessing and this would be followed by a ceremonial washing of the hands symbolizing the need for the cleansing of sin and it was probably at this point that Jesus stood up and laid aside his garments, took a towel and girded himself to wash the feet of the disciples. The text does not say this but I can only imagine that a very uncomfortable silence permeated that room as they watched the Lord of glory assume this lowly role. Perhaps they suddenly remembered what Jesus had taught them earlier when he said, "If anyone would be first he must be last of all and servant of all." Perhaps they remembered when he said, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted." But whatever was going through their minds, one thing was certain: their selfish pride was about to be exposed as they watched the self-existent, uncreated Creator of the universe, the Lord of glory, prepare to wash their feet. But I want to prepare you for something that we will understand more in a few minutes: this scene really didn't have that big of an impact on them because of their pride.

But verse 4, we learn that he, "rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about." In other words, he wrapped a large washing towel as they even continue to do to this day. They wrap that around them to avoid having any of the muddy water splatter up on their outer garments. So he laid was outer garments aside and didn't want to get that on him so that's the way they would do it. But I want you to notice something: the towel and the basin filled with water was already there. It had been there all along. The proper preparations had been made. But beloved, what you must understand is because of our pride, we can become so self-absorbed that we simply do not see opportunities to serve. We're too busy looking for a stage and for a spotlight. I have to pause here and think: what must the angels have thought? In fact, someday perhaps I'll have an opportunity to ask them. The one who is most holy assumes the role of the lowliest slave and then washes the feet of those who are least holy, even the feet of Judas. Paul so perfectly illustrated this in the text we read earlier in Philipians 2,

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

Beloved, Christ-like love is self-abasing. It is selfless. You may be a legend in your own mind and think you're too important to serve those who are, in your mind, beneath you but compared to the Lord of glory, you are nothing. I am nothing. What a rebuke to our egotistical, narcissistic culture that has made pride a virtue and humility a sign of weakness. Friends, in order to fully grasp what is happening here you must be brutally honest with yourself as I must be brutally honest with myself. We all love to promote ourselves. If you don't see that, you are seriously blinded by your pride. This is really what makes Facebook and Twitter so successful. They have capitalized on that. You see, our flesh is naturally averse to self-abasement, to selfless love. We are proud by nature. We have to battle this all the time. We are self-absorbed. We are manipulative. We demand that others meet our needs in very subtle ways and when they don't, our hearts get filled with anger and we become critical and contentious and that results in conflict and contempt and depression and emotional breakdowns and divorce and violence and on and on it goes. James said in 4:1, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?" In other words, that issue of pride. "You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel."

Dear friends, the Savior, the Creator, knew all of this. He knew this was going on in their hearts. He knows we all battle with this. He knew it so well because he knew that he was about to bear those very sins in his body the next day and yet he loved his disciples and he loved us enough to show us real humility and selfless love. By the way, the next time you're offended or even ignored, why don't you assume the role of a slave and seek someone to serve. Go wash their feet, so to speak, and then by the power of the indwelling Spirit you will manifest this magnificent fruit of loving humility.

Verse 5 says that, "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." Again, this is incomprehensible condescension. What a rebuke to the disciples and to all of us. But thirdly, let's focus on his impassioned example. It's the idea that he so deeply loved them that he fervently wanted them to do what he is doing, to have this kind of heart attitude. Verse 6, "So He came to Simon Peter. He," referring to Peter, "said to Jesus, 'Lord, do You wash my feet?'" Now, Peter is no doubt embarrassed, obviously confused. He's still

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blinded by his pride as we're going to see but he did love the Lord and yet he could not imagine such condescension. By the way, we see this in the emphatic use of the pronouns in his reaction where in the original it says, "Lord, you are washing my feet?" We would probably say, "Are you kidding me?" Plus like the others, Peter is still looking to Jesus as the conquering King, not as the suffering Savior. Not as a suffering servant. And he certainly did not understand the picture of spiritual cleansing that Jesus is about to teach.

Notice the Lord's tender and patient response. I really want to underscore that. I'm so glad he is that way. I'm so glad that he didn't say, "Peter, you knucklehead. I am so fed up with your boneheaded, idiotic, hardhearted..." you know. Aren't you glad he's not that way? Because I see myself in Peter all the time, don't you? "Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.'" Boy, I know what that's like, don't you? "Lord, I have no idea what you're doing in my life right now. I'm going to trust you. Maybe someday I will see it clearly, more clearly but, Lord, I just have to wait on you." And that's what he's telling Peter here. What a great lesson, right? Love is patient. Isn't that what Paul tells us? Love is patient, especially when it seeks to minister to someone that just doesn't get it. I mean, that's when you can get real frustrated and you just want to throw up your hands and say, "Oh, forget it."

Jesus knew that after Peter's denial which was going to come in just a few hours and after his work on the cross was finished and after the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them at Pentecost, he knew that then he would understand. Obviously, Peter is overwhelmed. He didn't get it. Verse 8, "Peter said to Him, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'" Now, here Jesus briefly digresses from his object lesson on love and uses Peter's confusion as a teachable moment to help him understand and all of us understand some very important theology. "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Verse 9, "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.'" Here Jesus is making a distinction between justification and sanctification. We know, according to Scripture, that justification is a one-time cleansing when a believer is judicially cleansed from the guilt from the penalty of sin. In Titus 3:5, Paul speaks of a believer's spiritual rebirth and he says that, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

So as we look at Scripture, we know that at salvation, we are not only forgiven but we are declared righteous having been washed by the blood of the Lamb. This, you might say, is even a positional sanctification; a one-time cleansing has occurred; a washing that never needs repeating. That's what he says in verse 10 to Peter that, "you are completely clean."

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But in sanctification, we see that there is a process of moral cleansing. By way of clarification, there are really 3 types of sanctification: there is positional sanctification which is tantamount to justification where we are once-for-all set apart from sin unto God; but then secondly, there is progressive sanctification whereby we are progressively conformed more and more into the image of Christ; and ultimately there is perfected sanctification when we are finally in glory, set aside from it forever. But here he's speaking of the progressive sanctification, this need for moral cleansing. We all have a need, an ongoing need for the purification of the heart which tends to accumulate the filth of this world, that dirt of sin that can rob us of sweet communion with God and this cleansing, we know, comes from the word of God applied by the Spirit of God. This is a practical cleansing that needs to take place on a regular basis, perhaps daily, in this process of sanctification. In Psalm 119:9, the psalmist says, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word." And Paul said in Ephesians 5:26 that, "Christ sanctifies," in other words, he cleanses, he purifies us, "by the washing of water with the word." And Jesus even said in his high priestly prayer in John 17:17, he prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

So as we look at Scripture we see that the agent of regeneration when we're made new creatures in Christ where we are ultimately set aside, justified and so forth, the agent of regeneration is the Holy Spirit. That happens one time. And the instrument of the cleansing is the word of God; a continual need that we have to confess our sin as the word of God exposes it and we learn to trust in Christ to keep our conscious clean so that we can enjoy the heartfelt presence of God deep within our souls, so we can enjoy a sweet communion with him, so none of that will be hindered, so that we will not grieve and quench the Spirit and forfeit blessing and eternal reward and even subject ourselves to the Father's chastening. Symbolically as we walk through life, we accumulate dirt, the dirt of sin on our feet, but we don't lose our salvation. Do you see? We don't lose our salvation so we don't need to bathe our whole body, we just need to wash our feet. In 1 John 1, beginning in verse 8, John writing to believers says this, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now, I want you to also notice here that the Lord has this amazing love even for his enemy Judas. Not only did he wash his feet but he gives him one final invitation to come and be cleansed from sin. Notice in verse 11 as if he's speaking to the one betraying him, "Not all of you are clean." It's almost as if he is saying, "Judas, do you hear me?" But perhaps like some of you, Judas chose to spurn the love of God, a choice that will forever damn him.

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So we've seen his infinite love and his incomprehensible condescension as well as his impassioned example. Now, what of our imperative responsibility? What is our immediate responsibility that is of such vital importance? We see it beginning in verse 12, "So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments 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 also should do as I did to you. 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. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'" By implication, you forfeit blessing if you don't.

Now, some will say, "Well Pastor, doesn't this mean we need to implement foot washing as an ordinance within the church?" I would argue: no, we want to be very careful here. To do that, I fear, would not only miss the point of Jesus' lesson in humility and love but also ignore the meaning of the text. Let me explain. This is not an ordinance like communion and baptism. This is an example of humility. Notice verse 15 again, "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." The word "as" in the original language, *kathos*, means "according as." "Do in like manner as I have done." He did not use another Greek term, the term "h α w" that would basically mean "that which." In other words, "Do precisely the same thing that I have done." Had he used that term, then foot washing would indeed become an ordinance that we need to obey and repeat. But he said, "For I gave you an example that you should do as I did to you," and the example here is that of self-humiliation, of selfless love not washing feet. "Do as I did to you." In other words, "On your own account demonstrate this kind of humble love to one another. Treat each other in the way that I have treated you."

Folks, we want to be careful not to reduce this magnificent example of humility that we need to live out in our daily life and reduce it into some kind of ritual of foot washing that has absolutely no significance in our culture whatsoever. It's interesting, later in verses 34 and 35, Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you implement a new ordinance of foot washing." He doesn't say that. "A new commandment I give to you that you love one another." Here's the heart of this passage. "Even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Now, I want to leave you with a sobering thought that will hopefully expose the stubbornness of our pride. You would think that this would have had a profound and immediate impact on the disciples, wouldn't you? I would. But you know, pride doesn't give up easily. Luke's account in Luke 22 reveals that after the Passover meal, Jesus announced that one of them would betray him but rather than concentrating on the

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shocking news that the Lord is going to be betrayed and the unimaginable pain that he must have felt, Luke says in verse 23, "They began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing." Okay, why such a callous disregard for Christ? Why is the focus on, "Okay, which one of you? I know it's not me. After all, I'm jockeying for position here." Do you see how all that works? Well, the cause was pride. Remember again, for months they had been trying to jockey for position in the coming kingdom so Jesus' announcement that someone is going to betray him, one of them, caused them not only to be suspicious of one another but to actually use this as an opportunity to exalt themselves as you will see, even after Jesus had just washed their feet.

Rather than focusing on Jesus' grief concerning his betrayal, Luke says in Luke 22:24, "A dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest." The Lord certainly must have thought, "Aw, you just don't get it, do you?" Beloved, pride is so powerful that it blinds us to our pride. We can't even see it. We can become so convinced of our superiority, so certain that we deserve to be treated in certain ways, so skilled in our manipulation that we not only are blinded to our own pride but we cannot see how we need to serve others. This is precisely what we see here. Dear Christian, examine your heart: if your heart is filled with jealousy and anger and resentment, know that pride is lurking somewhere in the shadows. If your marriage isn't working well, look first at your own pride. If you just can't seem to cope with life, humble yourself before the Lord and search and destroy your own pride and then seek to wash someone's feet.

But what is amazing to me is how incredibly patient our Lord is with them. Luke tells us, "And He said to them, The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table?" In other words, "That's certainly the way it is in the culture here." "But," he says, "I am among you as the one who serves." In other words, "I am the example." Then he says this, this is so comforting, "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In other words, he's saying this, "Yes, dear disciples, at the end of redemptive history I will establish my kingdom on the earth as I have promised all along and you're going to have a place of honor in it. Don't worry about that. I'll take care of that. You will be rewarded. You will sit at my table. You're even going to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel," as we see here and in other passages. "But men, learn this lesson of love. Learn the lesson of humility." Isn't it interesting that a few hours later Peter would deny him 3 times and then in utter brokenness he would melt in a puddle of

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tears and genuine repentance and he would go on to serve Christ for 40 years knowing that at the end of his ministry he would be crucified.

Can I leave you with some good news? Peter and the others eventually learned this lesson well, so well that before Peter died, he said to the persecuted saints that needed encouragement, the ones scattered all around in 1 Peter 5:5, he said this, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." Beloved, may we learn this lesson well. Ask yourself: how do those who know me best see me? Am I an arrogant, angry, contentious, opinionated, bully, control freak? Or am I a humble, loving, selfless servant in private as well as in public? Well, may this be the desire of our hearts, amen?

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they bear much fruit in our lives to the praise of your glory, I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.