

Introduction: Jesus' ministry had gone from public to private (John 1-12 being His public ministry). In John 12:35-50, Jesus gives His final call and warning to believe in Him. This was His final public speech. Their rejection of Christ was complete (John 1:11). John 13-17 began a time of private teaching between Jesus and the Twelve. This is often called the Upper Room Discourse. He was preparing them for His departure, the coming rejection and persecution, the coming of the Holy Spirit, His departure and death, His resurrection, and His ascension.

I. Opening Thoughts

- A. Pride, selfishness, stubbornness, and self-centeredness are hostile to true, Christ-like godliness. God hates pride. It is the grandest of all sins because it is the easiest to think we don't have.
- B. Humility is not something you see in yourself; it is something that others see in you.
- C. The big idea – True humility is demonstrated in love
- D. Goal – to humble the proud; to see Christ's humility and make it our own

Exegesis – John 13:1-11

II. Jesus' Focus on Love (vss. 1-2)

- A. With His death on the cross about 24 hours away, Christ was not preoccupied with it. Instead, He took the time to focus on demonstrating His supreme, self-sacrificial love toward the Twelve. He focused on building them up, preparing them for what is to come, and reassuring them
- B. Jesus, being God, was on a divine mission, a divine timetable (cp. John 12:27-28). Yet, He knew His work was not finished with the Twelve (cp. John 9:4)
- C. "Having loved His own...loved them to the end"
 1. John 1:11 – "Jesus came to His own, but they did not receive Him" predicted the mass rejection by the Jewish nation, which plays out in John 1-12
 2. John 1:12 – "As many as received Him" – the few that did (John 4:39 – Samaritans; 4:53 – Nobleman's family; 10:40-42 – John the Baptist's followers; 12:42 – some of the Sanhedrin) including the Twelve, became "His own"
 3. Jesus committed Himself to those who were His. As the Good Shepherd, He tends to and cares for His sheep (John 10:11, 14-16). While God does love, He has a special commitment, an everlasting love to those who believe in Him (Jeremiah 31:3)
 4. Jesus loved His own perfectly, completely, utterly, to the uttermost degree. This demonstrates self-sacrificial love for His disciples especially with the Cross looming ahead.
- D. Who could reject such love?
 1. Judas – Satan is the master of his heart. He was Judas' ruler. The difference between Judas and Jesus is the difference between love and hate. Jesus loves; Satan hates. If Jesus is ruler of your heart, you will demonstrate it in the way you love others; is Satan, you will demonstrate contempt for those who love like Jesus
 2. Satan and his agenda, his minions, and his followers (non-Christians; John 8:44) are opposed to the self-sacrificial love of Jesus. His agenda is one of pride, not humility; of stubbornness, not submission; of rebellion, not conformity. Once he enters the heart, that person is on their way to eternal destruction and separation from God. This is the nature of unbelief. To constantly turn away from the love of Jesus.
 3. The more Jesus was hated, the more He loved. He did not let the hatred of the people (or even Judas) derail Him from His mission!

III. Jesus' Humility (vss. 3-5)

- A. Vs. 3 is a comprehensive view of the exaltation of Christ. John states that He is a) all-knowing - omniscient, b) all-powerful – omnipotent, c) came down from heaven and was going back – heavenly origin, all of which made Him washing their feet all the more remarkable. Even in His preeminence, Christ humbled Himself (cp. Colossians 1:15-20)
- B. Foot washing – 1) customarily, after a long journey, in which the roads were dirty and perhaps muddy and they walked in sandals, guests who ever for a meal would have their feet washed by a non-Jewish slave, usually the lowest slave. 2) In antiquity, it was beneath a Jew to wash another Jew's feet

- C. Jesus' washing of their feet was the greatest way to demonstrate His love for the Twelve, even the one who would betray Him. Jesus was living by His own words ("Love your enemies" – Luke 6:27)
 - D. Humility defined Jesus' earthly ministry (Philippians 2:3-11). As Christians, humility should define our walk. What do you want to be known by? What kind of legacy do you want to leave? (Read C.J. Mahaney's quote from pg. 24 of his book *Humility: True Greatness*). Humility is not valued in our culture, nor is it considered a virtue. Our culture is one of self-fulfillment, selfies, self-esteem, a "look at me" attitude perpetuated in sports, in particular. On the other hand, humility gets God's attention (Isaiah 6:22).
 - E. What is humility? Honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness. It is, as Paul says in Romans 12:3, to "not think more highly of ourselves that we ought to thing, but to think soberly". Will others characterize us as humble or proud, stubborn, arrogant, and selfish?
 - F. What is pride? It is the essence of all sin. It is when sinful human beings aspire to the position and status of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence on Him. The end of pride is self-glorification. God hates pride (Proverbs 6:16-17; 8:13). He actively opposes pride and the proud (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-7)
 - G. In Jesus' humility, He was subject to the Father while here in earth (John 5:19, 30)
- IV. Jesus' cleansing (vss. 6-11)
- A. Jesus washing the feet of the Twelve demonstrates His love for them in the fact that He chose to symbolically cleanse them from their sins. The love of Jesus saves!
 - B. In addition to showing love through humility, the foot washing was a symbol of spiritual cleansing. The Twelve, particularly Peter, struggled with the thought of Christ's humility in facing the cross. This led to the misunderstanding Peter had with what Christ was saying and doing by washing their feet as "Messiah".
 - C. The foot washing was a symbolic cleansing from the dirt and filth of sin and entering into union with Christ, which is why Christ said "You shall have no share with me" to Peter if he refused. It anticipates the sacrificial atonement of the Cross, which washes our sins away. Carson says, "Unless the Lamb of God has taken away a person's sin, has washed that person, he or she can have no part with Him"
 - D. The words "You shall never wash my feet" contain the strongest negative in the Greek, which means "no, never, ever will You wash my feet"
 - E. Vs. 10 indicates that cleansing from one's sins in salvation is a once-for-all act, not something that has to be repeated ad infinitum. However, the need to confess and repent of sin is an everyday necessity in the life of the believer.
 - F. It is remarkable that Jesus washed Judas' feet although the next day He would betray Him and turn Him over to the Romans. That's love!
- V. Principles and Application
- A. Principles
 1. Humility must come from a heart of Christ-centered love
 2. Until you esteem others instead of yourself, you will never be humble
 3. False humility is pride because you become proud of your [so-called] humility
 4. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can kill the sin of pride and walk in humility.
 - B. Applications – How to cultivate humility?
 1. Reflect on the cross of Christ. The greatest show of love and humiliation was the cross.
 2. Begin your day by acknowledging your need for God and your dependence on Him. Let God know you need His strength for every task performed that day.
 3. Begin each day by expressing gratefulness to God. God is always worthy of thanks, even when you don't feel like it!
 4. Redeem your commute to work or school by worshiping God through music, listening to Christ-centered sermons, and/or reading God's Word
 5. Pray, study God's word, worship God through singing. Do this every day. Be consistent. Practice these spiritual disciplines, preferably at the outset of each day.
 6. Cast your cares on Him (1 Peter 5:6-7) and find rest in Christ (Matthew 11:28-30). Stop being stubborn and proud. You cannot handle it on your own.
 7. To end your day, give glory to God for the day's activities, whether good or bad
 8. Encourage and serve others each and every day. Pursue opportunities to serve others every day.