

35. Love One Another (John 13)

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTRODUCTION:

- John 11:1-46, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead after 4 days
- John 11:47-57, The religious leaders don't like all this zombie stuff and come up with two options as they discuss what to do about Jesus, Lazarus, and the crowds
 - Option 1: Let Jesus continue. Their fear is that the crowds will get so big that the Romans will view it as an uprising, crush them, and Jewish/Roman relations will be destroyed, ending the sweet gig they have going on
 - Option 2: Better for one man to die than for a nation to perish. Kill Jesus.
 - So from there on out, Jesus stays near the wilderness, but it is almost time for the Passover so the leaders wait for the day when he will show up in town
- John 12 → 6 days before the Passover begins
 - Jesus goes to visit Lazarus and his family
 - Scene of Mary anointing him for his burial by dumping a bottle of perfume on him and cleaning his feet w/ her hair
 - Did he tell them plainly he was going to die?
 - Jesus knows this is probably the last time he will see them before his death → try to imagine all the emotions Jesus is carrying in these verses
 - The religious leaders decide that Lazarus is just as dangerous as Jesus. They think he needs to be killed as well.
 - Jesus decides it is time to get read to celebrate the Passover week.
 - He heads into Jerusalem, but it is not a quiet entrance
 - The crowds continue to follow him
 - Jesus knows he is going to die soon
 - *John 12:27-28*
 - John 12:44-50 summarizes Jesus' life and ministry up until this point: If you believe in me, you believe in the Father because if you've seen me you've seen the Father. I am the light of the world, stepped into darkness. Hear my words. Keep them. If you don't, I don't judge you, but my words will testify against you when you stand before the final judgment. Reject them, and you reject God, because everything I have said comes from him.

John 13 - Love One Another

(v1-5) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid

aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- Jesus serves them physically before he serves them spiritually on the Cross
 - He loves them spiritually, he loves them physically
 - He demonstrates and declares the love of God
 - Our job too...
- Realize that he is doing this even though he knows this is the end
 - Going to the Father, yes, but he knows what comes first
- What would send a powerful message to his followers? What would be a punctuation on his life and ministry before he goes to die?
 - For their leader to serve them, but remember this isn't a person washing feet
 - E.g. my DG's fears
 - This is GOD washing feet
- What are feet like today? I don't know about your feet, but mine aren't very nice.
 - What were feet like then? Worse.
- More, think about who is around the table?
 - Judas (betrayal), Peter (denies), Thomas (doubts), they all flee. Mark runs naked.
- How does someone love and serve people who don't reciprocate? People who are at odds with you?
- Jesus KNEW xyz, SO... (John 13:3)
 - Jesus knew who was in charge...
 - He knew where he came from... (Who he was)
 - He knew where he was going... (Whose he was)
- So he can serve people who are/will be against him... So he can die on a cross
- The same is true for you as you think

[v6-11] He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

- I wonder how awkwardly quiet it was in the room. Pouring of the water, the sound of washing as people awkwardly await their turn
- Vv. 6-7 → Physical/Spiritual. Changing vantage point, OT and NT, pointing to Christ, looking back to Christ. All of it makes sense in hindsight, but in the moment nobody got it
- Vv. 8-11 → The ones who are clean are the ones who belong to me, to My Father.
 - He has given them into my hand (John 17:12)
 - If you belong to Jesus, you are clean
 - His blood washes us → He will picture this at the Last Supper and will enact it on the cross

- When you belong to Jesus, you are no longer defined by your filth, your dirt
 - That's all in the past → You are clean
 - Follower of Christ, child of God: do you feel clean? You are.
 - Spotless, pure, undefiled
- All you need now is to wash your hands → daily decision to not embrace your sin, but to embrace God. You ARE clean, but health follows a good hand washing

[12] When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand 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, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

- Let me tell you that foot washing was a servant's task
 - The Midrash specified that foot-washing could not be required of a Hebrew slave
- For people who didn't have a servant, the first one or two to arrive would perform the ceremony for the rest of the guests. (A whole other reason to be fashionably late)
- In Luke's account of the last meal we read (22:24): "A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest."
 - Jesus will be nailed to a cross within 15 hours... his heart is heavy...
 - Meanwhile, the disciples are arguing about who's the top dawg
 - They were willing to fight for the throne, but no one wanted the towel!
- Through this, Jesus has postured himself lower than a slave → can we dwell on that for a minute? The God who _____ has become lower than a slave.
- Your arguments about who is greater are silly. Serve one another. Make that the competition. Not who is the best, but who can serve the most.
- If God can wash our feet, we should wash one another's feet. More on this in a bit

Skipping ahead to a great summary → [34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Just as I have loved you, love one another. Do this and the world will notice.

Discovery Study:

What does this teach about God?

- God serves us because he loves us.
- *Philippians 2:5-8, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

- Why do all this? For you. For me. God serves you because he loves you. (John 3:16)
- Replace whoever you think God is w/ this reality

What does this teach about man?

- Our default is to self-exalt, but we are command to humble ourselves.
 - This is the big hurdle in all of our lives... James 4:1
- If you are a follower of Christ, your life should be defined by selfless serving
- In this passage, we are specifically called to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ - e.g. other followers of Jesus.
- This does not mean we shouldn't serve the world, but that Jesus is specifically talking about our family
- If we are honest, that is often more difficult
- It is easier to humble ourselves and wash the feet of those we do not know.
- But those in our own families? Fellow followers of Jesus whom we dislike, even despise? People to whom we have not spoken for years? Betrayers, backstabbers, people who abandon you?
- Jesus' instruction was clear: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."
- When we do this, it will have a cleansing effect upon other one another. Serving changes you. This is what we are called to do instead of arguing about who is right, who is the best, who is the greatest (either in your mind/heart or out loud)

What does this mean for our actions? If this is true, what do I do?

- True happiness is found in the opposite place from where you would expect.
 - Not through learning about service, or facebooking about it, or being the one who is served. True blessing (Gk: happiness) is found in doing the serving (v17)
 - This is a competition to outdo one another in pursuing happiness!
- What should you do? **Serve one another.**
 - Physically and spiritually it is dirty work.
 - You can't scold the dirt off, lecture it off, or gossip it off. You need to get dirty.
 - But this is what we are commanded to do. Serve one another.
- **Look at Jesus example and listen to his words:** If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

Who should I tell?

- If you serve one another, your actions will speak loudly.
- Doesn't exempt us from service, but this is the demonstrate side of the gospel coin vs. the declare.
- Living the gospel is demonstrating and declaring good news
- **This week, go and serve. Go be good news to someone else, starting with your church family and moving outward with unstoppable happiness and joy.**