

“A Tender Act Of Service”

John 13:1-20

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Teaching Aim: To understand every believer receives spiritual cleansing at the moment of regeneration (or salvation). To recognize periodic cleansing will need to take place in the life of every believer because of sin; this is done through repentance and confession to the Lord. (See **1 John 1:9**) To realize how important it is for every believer to be “*washed by the water of the Word*” every day. To understand the Word of God and repentance from sin are necessary to keep Christians in a right relationship with God.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus did the unthinkable (John 13:1-8)

1. Have you ever thought about what you would say to family members and friends if you found out it was the last evening before your death? This is exactly what Jesus was doing as we read **John chapters 13-17**. At this point Jesus had removed Himself from His public ministry and was focusing strictly on His disciples and on us today. What would you say to your family members and friends today if you found out you were going to die tomorrow?

2. Warren Wiersbe writes, “*Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Sunday, and on Monday had cleansed the temple. Tuesday was a day of conflict as the religious leaders sought to trip Him up and get evidence to arrest Him. These events are recorded in **Matthew 21-25**. Wednesday was probably a day of rest, but on Thursday He met in the Upper room with His disciples in order to observe Passover.*” What can we learn about the events of **chapter 13** from **verse 1b**? The word “*love*” is used only 12x in **John chapters 1-12**, but 44x in **John chapters 13-21**? Why the increase in the use of this word?

3. Was Judas’ decision to betray Jesus something new or had he been thinking about this for some time (**vs. 2**)? Why do you think Judas turned on Jesus? Who was working on Judas behind the scenes? Has Satan ever worked through you when you were angry?

4. What may have caused Jesus to wash the feet of His disciples at this moment (**vv. 3-4**)? (See **Luke 22:24-27**) Why would this arguing among the disciples be an irritation to Jesus? The dirty and dusty roads of Israel along with wearing sandals necessitated the need for frequent foot washings. Notice that none of the disciples had offered to do this humble task before the dinner, so Jesus does it now. Amazingly, Jesus humbly got down on His hands and knees to perform this task usually reserved for the lowest servant. Did Jesus realize He was about to wash the feet of the man who would betray Him to death? Why do you think Jesus did this?

5. **Verse 1** states that Jesus was going to love His disciples right to the end. Did He love them unconditionally? How was this demonstrated? How could Jesus maintain His joy even in the face of betrayal (**vs. 1**)? (See **Heb. 12:2**) Have you ever had a close family member or friend turn on you? How did it make you feel? What was your response to their betrayal?

6. What makes **verse 5** so amazing? (See **John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-18**) For the previous three years, Jesus had been teaching His disciples a message of sacrificial love and service to others. (See **Matt. 10:38; 20:16**) What are some ways that you are serving others today?

7. How did Peter respond when it was his turn? Peter impulsively reacted to what he saw in the flesh. Did Peter understand what Jesus was teaching His disciples spiritually (**vs. 7**)? Note: It is important to remember at this point that Jesus had not yet been crucified, He was still there with them. The washing was a symbol of the spiritual cleansing Jesus would do for His people through faith in His shed blood on the cross. The crucifixion was still a day away.

8. In **verse 8** we find Peter rebuking the Lord as he did in **Matt. 16:21-23**. How did the Lord respond to Peter's rebuke? Note: The big lesson here is that in order to be saved, we need a spiritual cleansing that can only come by grace through faith in Jesus.

9. William MacDonald writes, *“As Christians walk through this world, they contact a certain amount of defilement. Listening to vile talk, looking at unholy things, working with ungodly men inevitably soil the believer. He needs to be constantly cleansed.”* What has been the greatest challenge to your spiritual walk with Christ? How are you working through it? What can you do to be cleansed today?

Part II: A lesson on humility from the Master (John 13:9-15)

1. Once Jesus told Peter, *“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me,”* Peter jumped all the way in and said, if that is the case Lord was, *“not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”* According to Jesus, did Peter need to take the bath of regeneration all over again? What did he need?
2. In biblical days, the Jews used public baths in order to clean their whole bodies, but in traveling from one place to another their feet became dirty on the dusty roads. Their bodies were clean, but in their walk they became dirty. What two truths do we learn from Jesus in **verse 10**?
3. Jesus now shows His disciples the difference between the cleansing that takes place at regeneration (their salvation) and the frequent cleansings that would be needed throughout their lives. Jesus used an earthly illustration to explain a spiritual principle. All of the disciples had received a bath at regeneration and were clean with the exception of one of them. Which disciple was not clean (meaning saved) (**vs. 10b**)? Was Jesus surprised at this (**vs. 11**)? (See **John 17:12**)
4. In washing the feet of His disciple's, Jesus had taught them an object lesson. What was it? In **verse 12**, Jesus asked His disciples if they understood what He just did? At this point they did not understand the significance of the footwashing, the crucifixion would not come until the next day. Summarize in your own words what Jesus was teaching in **verses 13 & 14**. Is this principle consistent with what Jesus had previously been teaching them?

5. The purpose behind the footwashing was to establish an example for His people to follow (**vs. 15**). What are some ways that you are following this example of Jesus today?

Part III: A servant is not greater than his master (John 13:16-20)

1. Whenever Jesus said, "*Most assuredly,*" an important announcement was coming. What important message did Jesus give to His disciples in **verse 16**? What can we learn about the Christian walk from **Matthew 10:24-25**? How important is obedience to the Christian life?

2. According to **Eph. 2:8-9**, we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, apart from the works of the law. What did Martin Luther mean when he said, "*We are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone?*" What are some ways that you are serving the Lord in ministry today? Are you willing to help wherever needed?

3. Jesus chose all twelve of His disciples knowing the kind of people they were and even that Judas would betray him (**vs. 18**). What shocking message did Jesus give to His disciples in **verse 18b**? Why would this be shocking to them? (See **John 12:5-6; 13:29**) Do you think the other disciples thought that Judas was a man of integrity up until this point? Why?

4. What do we learn about Jesus from **Matt. 26:23-24**? In **verse 18**, Jesus quoted from **Psa. 41:9**. Who was King David talking about in this Psalm? (See Commentary) Who was the Son of David (or Jesus) talking about in **verse 18**? What are some ways that both Ahithophel and Judas were similar? (See **2 Sam. 17:23; Matt. 27:3-5**)

5. Prophecy is one of the hallmarks of the Word of God. How do we see prophecy at work in **verse 19**? Why should the prophecies found in the Bible be an encouragement to every Christian? Has fulfilled prophecy strengthened your faith? What, if any, significance is there in Jesus using the phrase, "*I am He*" in **verse 19**? (See Commentaries; **Exod. 3:14**)
6. Who was Jesus referring to when He said in **verse 20**, "*he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and He who receives Me receives Him who sent Me?*" (See **Matt. 28:18-20**) Who did Jesus send? Who is Jesus sending today?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The Feast of the Passover points towards the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins.
- Judas had been thinking of betraying Jesus for some time before the actual betrayal.
- The washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus was a lesson on humility and loving service to others.
- Like Peter, we sometimes do not see the significance of what God is doing in our lives.
- Being spiritually clean is more important than being physically clean.
- A servant is not greater than his master; sometimes we too will have to do unpleasant things in ministering to others.
- Not everyone who claims to be a follower of Jesus really is; we see that clearly with Judas.
- Being in the presence of the Lord does not save, we are saved only through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.