

JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF THE APOSTLES

Jesus knew on the evening of Passover Day that it would be his last night on earth before returning to his Father. During supper the devil had already suggested to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. And how he loved his



disciples!



So he got up from the supper table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his loins, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him. When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, ``Master, you shouldn't be washing our feet like this!'' Jesus replied, ``You don't understand now why I am doing it; some day you will.'' ``No,'' Peter protested, ``you shall never wash my feet!'' ``But if I don't, you can't be my partner,'' Jesus replied. Simon Peter exclaimed, ``Then wash my hands and head as well--not just my feet!'' Jesus replied, ``One who has bathed all over needs only to have his feet washed to be

entirely clean. Now you are clean--but that isn't true of everyone here.'' For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, ``Not all of you are clean.''

After washing their feet he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, ``Do you understand what I was doing? You call me `Master' and `Lord,' and you do well to say it, for it is true. And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow: do as I have done to you.



We see in the Gospel of John, Jesus' example of a servant as he takes time to wash the feet of His disciples. After washing their feet, Jesus tells them that "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 as I did to you." (John 13:14-15)

One thing that struck me the most in this passage was not the fact that Jesus performed the act of a slave by washing His disciples feet, but that He did it in the face of horrendous suffering. Stay with me here.

Jesus knew His hour had come. He knew that his struggle in Gethsemane was just around the corner and after that was coming unimaginable physical, and perhaps, emotional pain. It was a terrifying situation, I'm sure. But John says that "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. 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."

3 things stood out to me in this passage:

First of all, Jesus was a servant in spite of His circumstances. If anyone had a reason not be around people or to run away, it was Jesus. He was about to endure torture and humiliation to redeem us for the Father. I'm blown away by the fact that God chose to create us *knowing* that we would sin and that even after providing a way of redemption for us that we would reject His Son Jesus had a long road ahead of Him, yet He still gave of Himself to His disciples and showed them how He wanted them to serve others. I think the key here is Jesus knew it was in God's hands.

How many times do we miss an opportunity to serve others because it is inconvenient or doesn't fit into our schedule? How often am I so wrapped up in my circumstances that I miss opportunities to serve?

Secondly, Jesus had to get wet. The scriptures tell us that Jesus got up from His supper and took off His garments. I'm guessing that means he took off his outer clothes and was basically informal. He was going to have to be able to get on the floor and get to the disciples feet so he could wash and dry them. I don't know if any of you have ever participated in a "feet washing" service, but if you have, you know there's a good possibility you're going to get wet. Same thing happens when we serve others. We get involved in their lives. Our hands get "dirty". There will always be some cost to us when we "take up the basin and the towel."

Last but not least - Jesus took His time with each disciple while washing their feet. Not only did Jesus wash their feet, He took the time to wipe them dry. He could have had them all line up in a row and pour water over their feet as they stood there, and then tossed them a towel with a "here ya go, fellas!" But no..... He went to each person individually and washed and dried their feet.

What does this mean for us? Serving others takes time and our attention. Jesus could have hurried through washing their feet. After all, He was about to die on the cross. But He personally ministered to each disciple - including Judas. Now that's something to think about - Jesus was a servant to the very man who would betray Him.

The Basin and The Towel.

a song by Michael Card

*In an upstairs room
A parable is just about to come alive
And while they bicker about who's
best
With a painful glance He'll silently
rise
Their Savior Servant must show
them how
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of the towel*

CHORUS

*And the call is to community
The impoverished power that sets
the soul free
In humility to take the vow
That day after day we must take up
The basin and the towel*

*In any ordinary place
On any ordinary day
The parable can live again
When one will kneel and one will yield
Our Saviour Servant must show us
how
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of the towel*

CHORUS

*And the call is to community
The impoverished power that sets
the soul free
In humility to take the vow
That day after day we must take up
The basin and the towel*

*And the space between ourselves
sometimes
Is more than the distance between
the stars
By the fragile bridge of the
servant's bow
We take up the basin and the towel*

CHORUS

*And the call is to community
The impoverished power that sets
the soul free
In humility to take the vow
That day after day we must take up
The basin and the towel*