

Gospel of John Study

Session 26

In our last session we examined the last two events of Jesus' public ministry. The first was the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This one signified the type of Messiah Jesus was coming to be - the lowly, humble king who was to be a servant rather than the warrior-king the crowds expected and desired. The other event, which actually signaled to Jesus the end of His public ministry and that His hour had indeed come, was the arrival of a group of Greeks who wanted to talk to Jesus. This showed that Jesus was also the type of Messiah that God had always intended for mankind - a universal Messiah - one for every race of people on the planet. He was not going to be a Messiah just for the Jews but for everyone who would come to Him and believe in Him. The message for the Greeks was that Jesus was going to die in order to bring a harvest of eternal life but that to follow Jesus, one needed to die to himself as well so that the life of Jesus would bear fruit in that believer's life.

Now, in this session, we turn to Jesus' last night with His disciples. Jesus will eat His last supper with His Twelve chosen disciples and wash their feet. Then at the end of the evening, Jesus will predict Judas' betrayal. As John recounts the events of this night, they are full of meaning and show us a side of Jesus that His disciples needed to see in action before His impending crucifixion.

1. The Last Supper

[John 13:1-3]

Q: Why do you think that John couples the Passover with Jesus knowing that His hour had come? *(Earlier in the book, John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Passover celebration involves killing a lamb and smearing it's blood on the doorposts in order for God's wrath to pass over that house. Now Jesus knowing His hour had come means that He knew it was time for Him to offer Himself as the Passover Lamb for all mankind so that the wrath of God would pass over all who believed in Him.)*

The first Passover had been a turning point in the redemption of God's people. It was the act that finally freed them from the Egyptian bondage and allowed them to move to possess the Promised Land. The cross could also be seen as a second Passover in that it opened up a new era in the redemption of believers. John connects this thought of a new redemptive work by God with Jesus' love for His disciples.

This meal was the Passover meal for Jesus and His disciples. This took place on Thursday night and Jesus would be crucified the very next day on Friday. The phrase in v.1 - "He loved them to the end" is better translated "He loved them to the fullest extent". It shows that Jesus' love for His disciples knows no end and it also shows that Jesus fully accepted and carried out faithfully His responsibility His Father had given Him to care and protect His disciples so that none of them would be lost.

[John 17:12]

Q: When did the devil put the idea of betrayal into Judas' heart? (*v.2 - Before the supper*)

While we are never told the exact motive of Judas for betraying Jesus, we do know that at its heart, it was a spiritual issue and attributed to satanic suggestion. At its heart, Judas' plan was a rebellion against God. Judas sold himself to the power of evil. John puts this up front in this chapter, in this intimate time between Jesus and His disciples so that it isn't a total shock to the readers when it occurs later in this story of this night.

Q: Based on v.3, do you think we should see Jesus as an innocent victim of a miscarriage of justice and an evil plot against Him? Why or why not? (*No we shouldn't because the Father had given all things into Jesus' hands at this point and Jesus was fully aware of this fact.*)

[John 10:17-18]

All that was happening was by the design of the Heavenly Father. He had vested Jesus with all authority to lay down His life and take it up again. Thus, this allowed Jesus to maintain God's perspective in the events that followed and led up to the crucifixion. We can see Jesus' desire to return to His Father in the face of such intense circumstances. In order to minister effectively, we must always be like Jesus in maintaining the correct, divine perspective on our true identity and mission from the Lord. (Philippians 4:8)

[John 13:4-11]

Q: What did Jesus do during the course of this meal? (*v.5 - He washed His disciples' feet.*)

It is important to realize just how shocked the disciples would have been at this act by understanding it in context.

[Luke 22:19-24]

Just before this event, the disciples had begun arguing about who was the greatest among them. This was a common argument among the disciples and Jesus was going to use this one act to correct their thinking concerning this argument but also use it to teach another lesson as well.

The disciples and Jesus came straight off the street in order to eat this meal together. Ordinarily, the host of such a meal would arrange for a slave to wash the feet of the guests before the meal was served. Since this meal and meeting were secret, there were no slaves present to do this task. Also, it was considered the most menial of all jobs so this task fell upon the slave who was considered to be of the lowest rank, often upon any Gentile slaves in the house or young slave children. Peers did not wash each others feet except in very rare gestures of great love and respect for another. While all the disciples would have gladly washed Jesus' feet, the notion that He, their teacher and Lord would wash their feet was mind-blowing. Jesus' disciples were more than reluctant to undertake this task as it would imply that they were inferior to the others. To wash the feet of the other disciples was beyond their experience. Their pride, as noted in their conversation just before this, shows that they would resist such humble, demeaning service.

On the other hand, Jesus voluntarily humbled Himself to wash the feet of His disciples

and thus rebukes their pride by His actions. They were all stunned speechless by seeing Jesus prepare to do this act.

Q: What was Peter's response to seeing Jesus take on the role of the lowest slave? (v.6 & v.8 - *Do You intend to wash my feet? (incredulously). Then in v.8 - another translation could read "never to all eternity shall You wash my feet!" Peter did not want Jesus to demean Himself by doing this task. One of those "lower" disciples should be doing the footwashing - not Him.)*

This would be a huge embarrassment for the disciples to witness this. To wash the feet of the disciples, Jesus is showing His matchless, self-emptying humility as the Son of God. Can you imagine the very Son of God stooping down to wash the feet of His followers who should have jumped at the opportunity to wash His feet instead?

The first lesson of this footwashing was to show the necessity of gentleness and lowliness as cornerstones of what makes a person great in the kingdom of God. Jesus put an end to the argument over which of the disciples was greatest by His stunning actions here. This will come back later but if Jesus, who is their leader, can wash their feet, there should be no one beneath them so as to prevent them from washing anyone else's feet.

[Philippians 2: 5-11]

Q: What do you think that the act of footwashing would point to later that Jesus was referring to in v.7? (*It was pointing to the cross.*)

This means that Jesus fully understood that He was heading to the cross. He had come from the Father above and taken on human flesh in order that His deity would be revealed in human flesh. Think about that. God was going to show us the potential for eternal life through having Jesus Christ, His Son, come in human flesh and die so that He could raise Him from the dead for all to see. The footwashing was a picture of this extremely humble and loving nature of Jesus giving Himself to mankind. We would be tempted to think that this gesture was one of weakness yet it was one of strength. And to help the disciples understand greatness in God's kingdom, here at the point of Jesus' supreme weakness we see Jesus' greatest service. While the cross would appear as weakness to those who didn't believe in Jesus, yet from God's perspective, it is His ultimate strength at work as it broke the power of sin and death over man and made reconciliation possible between man and God.

Q: What was Jesus' response to Peter's declaration in v.8? (*That if Jesus didn't wash him, he'd have no part of Jesus. This next section of this conversation with Peter further cements in the readers' minds that Jesus was talking about His crucifixion as much as He was talking about the need for humble and servant hearts.*)

This response shows that Jesus expressed this washing as a necessity that would make him both socially acceptable for dinner (to sit with Jesus) but also for the cleansing of his soul so that he'd be acceptable in the kingdom of God. The Lamb of God has to take away the sins of the world - of each person, including Peter. The phrase "have no part with Me" means "have no inheritance with Me". It means the person will not share in the inheritance of the saints or the

blessings God has for them.

Peter misunderstands Jesus' words and thinks that Jesus is speaking of a literal, physical washing and so he requests a full bath from Jesus. Now we need to get into the grammar weeds for a minute to fully understand what Jesus is saying and how important this exchange is. In v.8 the word for "wash" means to cleanse and was used when one was washing a part of their body, especially for ritual or ceremonial cleansing. Thus, it was the proper word to use in here at Jesus was only washing their feet.

Peter took Jesus' words that if it was important to wash his feet, then why not just have Jesus wash all of him, every part of him. Yet, Jesus clarifies His statement to Peter by telling him in v.10 that if a person has already bathed, then they only need their feet washed to be totally clean. The word in v.10 means to bathe completely - cleansing the whole - not just a part.

In reality, what Jesus is telling Peter, and Peter will not understand until after the Spirit falls upon him, is that Jesus is not speaking of an external washing at all. He is using the external footwashing as a picture of spiritual cleansing from evil and sin. The word of bathing in v.10 is in the perfect tense. In other words the spiritual bathing that Jesus is talking about in v.10 happens once and then is done. That's what the perfect tense means. It happened in the past time but it was completed and never needs to be repeated as it is finished fully.

So, the bathing Jesus said only happens once and then is complete is our salvation. It is when we put our faith in Jesus - then we are saved and there it is never needed to be done again. We are completely clean in God's eyes at that time. The washing Jesus spoke of is the need for correction that happens occasionally in the life of a believer. It is the recognition of sin or an error in our attitude that requires correction and repentance. It doesn't affect our overall cleanliness before God, it only affects our feet - or the part of us that comes in contact with the world. That's why Jesus could say in v.10 that the person who had bathed was completely clean, even if their feet may have picked up some dirt (wrong thinking or behavior) from the world. This means that correction would be needed from time to time. The end of the analogy Jesus was teaching was that once a person is cleansed, that person is always acceptable to God - once saved, always saved. In a live-action picture of this event, we have the Word of God (Jesus) washing Peter. It's the picture of Jesus washing all who come to Him in faith. The humility of footwashing is the foreshadowing of the humility Jesus would show on the cross the next day.

[II Timothy 3:16-17]

[Hebrews 10:10]

Q: What did Jesus mean when He said that "not all of you are clean" at the end of v.10? (*He meant that Judas had never been cleansed.*)

Q: How many of the disciples are present during the footwashing? (*all of them, 12*)

Q: What does this tell us about the love of Jesus for His disciples? (*He loved them all, even Judas, it was unconditional, powerful and perfect. The other disciples had no idea Judas had made himself Jesus' enemy.*)

So this means that Jesus, knowing full well that Judas was about to betray Him, washed Judas' feet. This is Jesus giving Judas one last chance to change his mind about the plan he'd hatched already. It's wild enough to think that Jesus, the sinless, perfect Son of God would stoop to wash anyone's feet but to think that He loves Judas enough to make sure that He washed His feet alongside the other faithful disciples. Jesus could have called a dozen legions of angels to appear and smite Judas in a dazzling display of divine power. Yet, He didn't. He continued to love Judas and offer him another route. He afforded Judas a place of honor with the others and loved even the one who was going to sell Him out in an hour or so.

[John 13:12-20]

Q: According to Jesus in v.13, why should the disciples now wash one another's feet? *(If their teacher and Lord did it to them, they should not see themselves as above their teacher. v.15 Jesus reveals He did it to be an example to them.)*

It's important that while Jesus is still referring to what He's going to do on the cross in this section, He's also expanding this to mean humble, loving service to others, too. One of the ways human pride manifests itself is in the refusal to lower oneself to serve in a role that one sees as beneath himself. Even outward Christian zeal apart from humility is hollow and pathetic.

Q: In the context of this section (vv. 12-20), what is Jesus saying in v.16? *(No one has the right to think he is exempt from tasks taken voluntarily by one's master or one's leader. The slave or the emissary does not have the right to judge any task as lowly or beneath him after his master or leader has undertaken the task freely.)*

Q: Since footwashing was the very lowest, bottom of the barrel, chore to be done by any slave, what does v.16 tell us in our day and age? *(That we are to do as Jesus did - not reject doing the lowest servant roles set before us.)*

The reference to one who is sent is yet another reference of Jesus to Himself as the One who was sent by the Heavenly Father to earth to serve as our Passover Lamb.

Q: What is the result of knowing these truths Jesus was teaching and then doing them? *(v. 17 - they would be blessed)*

[James 1:23-25]

[John 12:47-48]

Q: According to v.18, why did Jesus chose Judas to be a member of "the twelve"? *(to fulfill Scripture)*

[Psalm 41:9]

This is a psalm of David. In this he spoke of various troubles but the worst one was the

defection of a trusted friend in his time of desperate need. This probably speaks of the defection of Ahithophel who was David's trusted advisor and was incredibly wise, when he defected during the insurrection of Absalom, who was David's own son. (The story is in II Samuel 15:12 and vicinity) In ancient times and according to their standards of hospitality, betrayal by one who had shared bread with the victim was especially heinous.

Despite Judas' impending betrayal (which was yet to happen and the 11 didn't know the betrayer would be - other than Judas) God was going to use Judas' worst betrayal of His Son for His redemptive purposes. By Judas' betrayal, Jesus would be sent to the cross. Only after the Spirit fell upon the disciples would their heads clear and they would understand the events and words of Jesus with clarity. However at this time, Jesus' words served to keep the disciples together until the time when the Spirit would be poured out upon them. Remember, the disciples needed to stick together during the "dark days" or "night when no one can work" period of time from the cross until Pentecost. After the resurrection, they would rejoice and sticking together would be easier but until then, this prediction of Judas' behavior would be part of the glue to hold them together as a group.

Q: What does Jesus want the disciples to believe? (v.19 - *that He is the One - the Messiah*)

Jesus closes this section of the footwashing in v.20. This verse has three major points that we need to understand.

1) This teaching fills out the Messianic claim of Jesus in v.19 (I am the One). In this it points to the supernatural unity and intimacy between Jesus and His Father.

2) This verse serves to tie the faithful disciples to Jesus and predict the failure of Judas to believe. Jesus' mission to earth comes from the very highest authority - God. The disciples' ministry will take on the same tone as it comes from the same authority. It gives the disciples a glimpse of the significance their lives will take on after Jesus dies.

3) Jesus is foreshadowing the commission He'd give them in **John 20:21** - "*Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" On the front side of the cross, in the disciples' minds, this was just a statement about the nature of the work that would soon be theirs after the resurrection. On the back side of the cross, this statement acts as a commission in itself that would soon consume their lives. This statement by Jesus, that those who received Him, would become a commission to all who received Him and thus are sent out by the Father's will.

2. Jesus predicts His betrayal

[John 13:21-30]

Here in v.21 we find Jesus "troubled" again.

Q: Does anyone remember what the word "troubled" means from our study in chapters 11 & 12? (*agitated, angry, stirred up, etc.*)

Again, Jesus becomes troubled in His spirit.

Q: What was the reason for Jesus' troubled attitude here? *(He knew He was going to be betrayed by someone He close to Him and that He loved.)*

The word "testified" means to "witness" and it is the same word we get our word "martyr" from. Here Jesus is witnessing and testifying that the world is evil. According to Jesus, based upon Him bringing up this matter, the time for Judas to make a final choice is upon him. Will he renounce his evil plot against Jesus and ask for forgiveness or will he move forward with his plan?

Q: What was the disciples' reaction to Jesus' statement about one of them betraying Him? (v.22 - *They were at a loss to know which one of them would do such a thing*)

Before we dive into the next few verses, we need to go back to the customs of the day as they pertained to dining at a feast or formal dinner as this one was. Remember, those who were eating the meal, were reclining on a cushion around a short table with their feet away from the table. The host, in this case Jesus, would have been seated or reclined in the place of honor. As the people typically reclined on their left arms and ate with their right, the spot to the host's left was considered the place of highest honor. This is because you'd be next to the host and facing the host. The spot to the right of the host was also an honorable position but this person's back was to the host. So if the person to the right wanted to speak to the host, it would be common to just lean back upon the chest of the host and cock one's head back rather than get up and re-situate one's whole body for a simple question or word with the host. This passage gives us a fairly strong picture of who was sitting close to Jesus and why things happened the way they did.

Notice in v.23 the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved". This is the first time this phrase is used in the book but it won't be the last. It is John speaking of himself rather than calling himself by name. John doesn't use this phrase out of conceit but rather John considers himself profoundly indebted to grace. This is a form of humility to leave his own name out of his own work in order that Jesus would be magnified.

Q: In v.24, who did Peter gesture to? *(John, the disciple who Jesus loved)*

Q: What does John do in v.25? *(He leans back upon Jesus to ask Him who the betrayer will be.)*

Q: What was Jesus' answer to John? *(Watch Him and the one He gives the morsel to will be the betrayer.)*

Q: Who did Jesus give the morsel to? (v.27 - *Judas Iscariot*)

This is the only place in the New Testament where the word "morsel" or "sop" is used. Back to middle eastern etiquette for dining, the morsel was a hard piece of bread that was used to scoop out a tasty bit of what was in the central pot on the table. It was used like we'd use a utensil. Imagine that the host sees a chunk of meat or a big piece of juicy fruit in one of the

serving bowls on the table, he could reach in with the morsel and scoop out this desirable piece of food and give it to one of the people closest to him - usually the person sitting to His immediate left - the guest of honor. So in John's account here, we see that Jesus is going to take some hard bread and scoop out some food for Judas, who is sitting the place of honor - right next to Jesus. John is sitting to Jesus' right, as he was able to lean back upon Him and Peter would have been to the right of John as he could speak privately to John without alerting the others as to his question. What this shows us is that Jesus, the host, who seated all the guest (disciples) seated Judas in the very place of honor above the faithful eleven others. This is Jesus' last meal on earth and His last meal with His disciples and He knows Judas is going to betray Him and He still loves Judas enough to seat him next to Himself in the place of honor. He treated Judas with esteem and love. If you were one of the other disciples and you saw this act by Jesus the host, you would assume that Jesus regarded Judas as a close friend. However, this was Jesus' final act of kindness to Judas before he surrendered to the forces of darkness. We don't know how long Judas held the morsel before taking it from Jesus. After Judas received the morsel, his heart was set and the die was cast. In his heart, he had passed the point of no return.

Q: What did Jesus tell Judas after Satan entered into him? (*v.27 - to do quickly what he was planning on doing. With Judas' descent into darkness complete, Jesus urges him to carry out his plan quickly.*)

The actual wording of the statement by Jesus is actually an command. He is telling Judas to get the lead out and do what he's going to do more quickly than he's doing it. In one sense it shows the eagerness of Jesus for the cross. Jesus was aware that the time of His sacrifice of Himself was at hand. He knew that His sacrifice of Himself was to be done on Passover and that was rapidly approaching so He needed to encourage Judas to get his plans moving now.

Q: What are the three purposes of the devil? (*John 10:10 - to steal, kill and destroy*)

The devil thought he could destroy God's plan by using Judas to betray Jesus to the authorities and have Jesus killed. He also knew that after using Judas to carry out this plot against Jesus that he could kill Judas.

Q: What did the other disciples surmise about Judas' abrupt departure from the dinner? (*vv. 28-29 - They were perplexed and had no idea why Judas was sent out at that time.*)

The "feast" mentioned in v.29 was not the Passover but rather the Feast of Unleavened Bread that happened after the Passover and lasted for one week. They were already celebrating the Passover Feast that night and would thus need nothing else for that meal.

[Luke 22:52-53]

Notice that the power of darkness had been given authority to carry out its plan against Jesus at this moment in history. John saw this darkness at work as soon as Judas opened the door to leave. John saw this darkness as a sign of the hour coming upon Jesus. John, throughout the book, has shown us a contrast between light and darkness.

[John 1:5]

This battle was a contrast between light and darkness. It was the battle between what Jesus heard from His Father and what His enemies had heard from their father, the devil.

Q: What are some ways we can tell the difference between the voice of our Father and the voice of the devil?

Q: Why do you think that Jesus shows love and even honor to those who hate Him?

[Romans 2:4]

This kindness and mercy of God leads sinners to repentance. This is God's overarching goal for every person, to repent from their sins and come to know Him personally by putting their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Messiah (Savior).

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?