

*The Gospel in a Wash Basin*

John 13:1-17

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11

Bethany Baptist Church

October 3, 2021

...pray...

Summer is *over* and it's time to *return* to the Gospel of John!

We completed the *first half* of John in June and promised to dive into the *second half* after Labor Day.

But before we begin, let's review some *background information* concerning John's account of Jesus.

The aging **Apostle John** wrote his gospel in the **80's AD**. **M,M,L** (Synoptics) were already in circulation.

His **purpose** was clear: the salvation of his readers through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. John writes in **20:31** – *these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

So *believing in Jesus* is the crucial concept in John's Gospel!

John framed-up the first half of our story (1-12) around **seven specific signs** that testified to Jesus as the Son of God: *water is turned to wine, a nobleman's son is healed, a lame man is healed by the pool of Bethesda, Jesus feeds 5000, Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus heals a man born blind, Jesus raises His friend Lazarus from the dead.*

**OBTW** – there is **one more sign** coming in John's *second half*! Can you guess what it is?

In addition to saving faith, John stresses the *deity* of Christ. Jesus is *truly man and truly God*. He Himself claimed (12:45) "*He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.*"

Finally, it would be good to remember as we move from the Jesus' *public ministry to Israel* to His *private ministry to His disciples*, Israel had *rejected* Jesus.

Near the end of John 12 we read: *These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. ... Messiah had come, Israel had rejected.*

**So let's return to the *Gospel of John*! *Open your Bible (or tap your app) to John 13:1-17.***

John moves from the *first* to the *second half* of his gospel.

The *second half* (13-21) focus on Jesus' *personal ministry* to His disciples, including His *crucifixion, resurrection* and the *events that followed*.

Half of this section is spent detailing the **9-10** hours Jesus spent alone with His disciples, immediately before His *pre-dawn betrayal*.

Those hours were like that *final locker-room huddle* where a coach gives *final instructions* and *final encouragement* before the team takes the field.

This morning's *encouragement* and *instructions* will undergird the disciples' entire ministry, and speak straight to us as well.

**Jesus shares the foundation of His ministry with His disciples.**

**v.1      *Amazing love.***

**vv.2-11   *Shocking humility.***

**vv.12-17   *Compelling beatitude.***

**Let me introduce v.1 with a *line* from one of the great hymns of our faith:  
“Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou, My God, shouldst die for me?”**

***Amazing love!***

1. *The table has been set.* Jesus and the Twelve are *reclining* around the table.
  - a. It is *Thursday* evening. That day the priests had sacrificed *thousands* of Passover Lambs.
  - b. This evening, across the city, worshipers are *gathering* to celebrate Passover.
  - c. The *Jewish Passover* commemorated God’s *deliverance* of Israel from four centuries of *bondage* in Egypt (OT *Exodus*).
    - i. It was *instituted* by God the night before He led them out of *brick baking slavery*.
    - ii. **This** Passover (Jn 13) will be the *last* “God sanctioned” Passover in history!
    - iii. This very *Upper Room Passover meal*, will give birth to its replacement, the *Lord’s Supper*.
    - iv. And it will provide the context for Jesus’ *shocking preview* of His *amazing love* for His people.
2. Jesus knew what the next **24** hours held for Him. *His hour had come.*
  - a. He had known it for *all eternity*. Everything in history and everything in Scripture led up to *this time (His hour)*!
    - i. The *time to die* in the place of His people.
    - ii. The *time to atone* for all their sins.

- b. But it was *also* time to *leave* this world and *return* to His Father.
  - i. Here is yet another reference to Jesus being *sent* from the Father on this *divine deliverance mission*.
  - ii. And with *the time* here at last, Jesus would soon *go back* to His Father. As **Wm Hendriksen** points out, *Jesus was going home!*
3. Yet this text reminds us of *more* than Jesus' *mission*, it glorifies His *motivation*,
  - a. Jesus was motivated by *love*. A love so *servicing and sacrificing and humble* that it defies human *comprehension*.
  - b. *...having loved His own...He loved them to the end*.
  - c. John puts Jesus' love *right up front* of the second half of his gospel because our Savior's love will be the *strong foundation* of all that follows: *foot-washing, teaching, prayer, mocking, suffering, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, final encounters*. All from *love*.
  - d. Which means that *atonement, forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, and eternal glorification* all flow from the *fountain* of Jesus' *love*.
    - *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10*
  - e. How anyone can question the *love of the Godhead* in the *death of the Son* suggests that they have not *carefully read*, or that they *sinfully dismiss*, the testimony of this starting point to what unfolds in John: *having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost*.

**And so we begin our study of Jesus' *final earthly hours* with a reminder **He knew His time and He embraced His mission and He loved His followers.****

**Jesus' amazing love generated a demonstration of shocking humility (read v.2-5).**

1. *Immediately*, John lets us in on something that *not even the disciples* know: Judas Iscariot was a *traitor*.
  - a. If you are *history buff*, perhaps you can name other *infamous traitors*:
    - i. *Marcus Brutus Junius* – Brutus led a *group assassination* of Roman Emperor *Julius Caesar*; Brutus was the original *backstabber*! “*Et tu, Brute!?!*”
    - ii. *General Benedict Arnold* – Anti-hero of the American Revolution.
    - iii. *Vidkun Quisling* – **WW2** Norway, collaborated w/ Nazis, soon “*quisling*” became a byword for *traitor*.
  - b. But **no** *traitor's name* has darkened the pages of history like *Judas Iscariot, son of Simon*. And like *everything else*, Jesus *knew it all along*!
  - c. Vv.2 & 11 form *bookends* for what *follows next* around the Passover table: Judas was *there*, Judas was *served*, ... Judas was *loved*.
2. In **v.3**, John reiterates that Jesus knows His *authority, mission, and identity*.
  - a. Authority – *All things have been given into His hands by the Father*.
  - b. Mission – *He has come from and will soon return to God*.
  - c. Thus, Jesus is *eternal*, Jesus is *God's Son*, and Jesus is *God*. That's Jesus' *identity*. Again, John 12:45 – “*He who sees Me, sees the One who sent Me.*”

3. **Everyone** is *reclining* around the low table. Customarily: *left arms* resting on the table, *feet* pointing away from the table. Perhaps the *Passover meal* is on the table – but *untouched*, because something has been *neglected*!
- a. Certainly within *plain sight* in the room are a *basin*, a *pitcher of water*, and a *long linen towel*. Stuff for a servant. Not a Jewish servant, a *Gentile* servant!
  - b. Because before the meal will be served, everyone's *feet* must be *washed*. A *lowly* job! Too low, even, for a *Jewish servant*.
  - c. But there are **no** *servants at all* in the Upper Room. So the job should have fallen to one of the Twelve, probably the *youngest*.
  - d. The meal *waits*. Jesus *waits*. If there had been *clocks* in the first century, you could have heard one *ticking* in the background!
  - e. But the Twelve, to a man, *studiously ignore* the servant stuff. **Not me!** *I'm going to be great! Washing feet would look bad on my resume!* And they *ignore* Jesus' teaching (Matt 23:11), "*But the **greatest** among you shall be your **servant**.*"
  - f. **Jesus** *gets up* from the table. He *exchanges* His clothes for the humble servant's *long linen towel*, and *wraps it* around Himself, leaving an end to *dry their feet with*.
  - g. We **aren't** told whose feet He first washed first. But Jesus went from man to man, *stooping* at their dirty feet, *washing* and *drying*.
  - h. No words are *recorded* (not yet) – everyone is *shocked*.

4. But then Jesus comes to **Simon Peter!** Read vv.6-10.

- a. Beloved, *what do you think of*, when you think of Simon Peter?
  - i. *Important? Impetuous? Inconsistent?*
  - ii. One commentator writes: “*Peter was the kind of guy who did his thinking out loud!*”
- b. So Peter is apparently the first disciple to *speak up*. His *shocked question* begins the **first** of **three** *exchanges* between Peter and Jesus:
  - i. “*Lord, do You wash my feet?*”
    1. Does the *Master* take the role of a *servant*?
    2. Does the *Rabbi* wash the feet of His *disciples*...?
    3. And perhaps Peter is *especially aware* of His own *sinfulness* (Lk 5:8, supernaturally successful fishing trip – “*Go away from me Lord, for I am a **sinful** man.*”)
  - ii. But Jesus isn’t *surprised* that Peter **doesn’t** *get it*. He answers **(7)**:
    1. “*What I do you **do not** realize now, but you will understand hereafter.*”
    2. Jesus knows Peter **can’t** yet understand the *picture* that’s being *painted*. The *truth* that is so *powerfully portrayed*.
    3. And he **won’t** fully understand for *some time*, until *after* Jesus’ has *ascended* to the Father, and the Holy Spirit has *come to enlighten* Jesus’ followers..



- c. *Second exchange (8). Now Peter doubles down!*
- i. “*Never shall You wash my feet!*” Perhaps did Peter even dare to pull his feet away from Jesus!?!
  - ii. In response Jesus begins to *unfold* two of the lessons His humble act teaches us. “*If I do not wash you, you have no part in Me.*”
    1. *First.* Peter needed to accept that Messiah would *humble* Himself, not *exalt* Himself – which means He must *serve*.
      - a. The disciples have *resisted* this truth.
      - b. They still *cling* to the hope of a conquering, Davidic King.
      - c. But Jesus’ *first advent* is the coming of a *Suffering Servant* and *Sacrificial Lamb*. Big lesson!
    2. *Second.* The only way to a *relationship* with Jesus is by His *spiritual cleansing*.
      - a. The shocking *foot-washing* is a picture of the *soul-cleansing* that Jesus secures by His *blood*.
      - b. His *death on the cross* by which He *takes in His body* the sins of *all who believe*, and *pays* for them.
      - c. His *resurrection on the third day* to validate that God is *satisfied* and *eternal life* can be yours!
      - d. “*What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus! What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!*”
      - e. Friends, this truth is *still in play this morning*, and the blood of Jesus can wash away *your* sins. Like Peter, you need to *understand* it and *believe* it!

- d. So then (9) Peter pegs the other end of his *enthusiasm gauge*!
- i. “*Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.*”
    1. Do you suppose Peter *spilled water on the floor*, trying to *push his head* into the basin? Probably **not**... 😊
  - ii. Jesus’ response (10) *builds on the truth* of **v.8**. And it hints at another *issue*:
    1. “*He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.*”
    2. Here is the *corollary* to Jesus’ *spiritual cleansing* lesson:
      - a. Your faith in Jesus’ *death/resurrection* secures your *complete* and *permanent* cleansing from sin.
      - b. You **don’t** need to *somehow secure your salvation, over and over* (to bath, time and again).
      - c. Yet you **will** *stumble*, and you’ll need to *repent* and *seek* the Holy Spirit’s *power for daily living*.
      - d. **Paul** will write (Gal 5): *walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh*.
    3. Then Jesus *foreshadows* a sad truth. While **11** of the **12** are *completely clean*, one of the 12 is **not**...
5. Here John *pauses the narrative* to explain (**read v.11**). Here is the other *bookend* for **v.2**. Here is why Jesus added: “**Not all of you are clean.**” And Jesus knows *exactly who* that is. He’s *always* known.
- a. Judas Iscariot is *sitting at the table*, and he’s *listening*.
  - b. Judas Iscariot is *having his feet washed*, and he doesn’t *complain*.
  - c. But Judas Iscariot is **not clean**, by the *only washing that really counts*.

**Amazing love. Shocking humility. The gospel in a wash basin!**

**Jesus teaches if you *follow His example* you will be *blessed* (read vv.12-17).**

1. The *feet of the Twelve*, yes Judas too, have been *washed*. Jesus has exchanged the *servant's linen towel* and donned *His street clothes*.
  - a. But before the Passover meal begins, He needs to *press home* what's just happened: "*Do you know what I have done to you?*"
2. In addition to the "*spiritual cleansing truth*," there is an *example to follow* for every disciple. It's *right on the surface*. It's *unavoidable*.
  - a. It's a lesson from *greater to lesser*. From the *Teacher and Lord* to the *disciples* who follow Him.
    - i. Jesus is **the Teacher!** The *crowds* He taught knew it (authority!). *Nicodemus* knew it (aged teacher, seeking eternal truth, *You must be born again*).
    - ii. Jesus is *Lord!* Jesus wears it as a title of *deity* and *authority*.
    - iii. He is *Lord* and *Teacher*, so you **can't** *refute* Him or *refuse* Him!
  - b. **Jesus' lesson is to *gird-on His attitude of humble service* (2X).**
    - i. To *set aside pride* and *serve one another*. Again, Paul writes in Gal 5 – *through love serve one another*.
    - ii. If **Jesus** did it (Lord & Teacher), beloved, **you** can't *ignore* His example!
  - c. **OBTW**, Jesus is **not** establishing *foot washing* as the *third ordinance* of the Church (*baptism, Lord's Supper*).
    - i. The language here is the language of *example*, not explicit command or pattern (*do as I did*, as opposed to *do what I did*).
    - ii. And the rest of the **NT** fails to teach this as a *first century church practice*.

3. “*Truly, truly, I say to you...*” We’ve read this *often* in John – *do you remember?* This going to be *important!*
  - a. Again, Jesus compares the *greater* to the *lesser*, perhaps a little more forcefully! “*...a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.*”
  - b. There’s just **no** *escaping* Jesus’ call to *serve one another*, even in the *most humbling ways*.
4. Then Jesus ends with a *principle* for all His followers to embrace:
  - a. “*If you **know** these things, you are blessed if you **do** them.*”
  - b. “*Blessed.*” Have you heard Jesus use that term before? Perhaps in the *Beatitudes* (Sermon on the Mount; Matthew 5)? For example, “*Blessed are the humble*” and “*Blessed are the peace-makers.*”
  - c. The basic meaning of “*blessed*” is simply “*happy.*” But when Jesus’ promises *blessing*, it’s much richer than mere, temporal *happiness!*
    - i. To be *blessed* is to *live under God’s favor*.
    - ii. You can be *under God’s favor*, whether your neighbor *envies* you or not.
    - iii. You can be *under God’s favor*, whether you *feel* blessed or not!
    - iv. Because if you *obey* Him and *serve* your neighbor, you **will** live under God’s favor. His *good hand* will be on you!

**So add this to all other *beatitudes* you can find in your NT: *Blessed are those follow Jesus’ example and obey Jesus’ words and serve one another.***

**I gotta tell you, this text has really *stepped on my toes!* Why are we so slow to serve?**

1. *Pride*. This is the polar opposite of *humility* so pride is the number one enemy of *servicing*.
  - d. Perhaps a *pastor* says – I’m a leader, not a servant. He completely forgets Jesus’ words; “*But the greatest among you shall be your servant.*”
  - a. Perhaps a *senior member* says – “*I’ve done my time, let someone else serve.*” Can you show us that in your Bible?
  - b. Perhaps you hear *this* – “*That’s not my gift.*” “*That’s not my calling.*” But Jesus says, *right here*, we are called to *serve one another*, and *blessed* when we do!
2. *Laziness*. Some people just **won’t** make themselves do the *hard things!*
  - a. But the **NT** teaches that the *fruit of the Spirit* includes *self-control*.
  - b. So take out the *garbage*, and be *thankful* – if there’s *garbage* this morning, you must have had *supper* last night!
3. *Busyness*. Ever notice that when you ask after someone, they tell you *they’re just flat busy!?!*
  - a. But they’re **not** really *complaining*.
  - b. Because in the *currency* of our *culture*, to be *busy* is to be *important!*
  - c. So, **no** time here to *humbly serve* someone else.
4. *Inattentiveness*. *Serving* is just **not** on our *radar*.

**Brothers and sisters, who will you serve this week?**

“*If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.*”

**...pray...**