

**John 13: 1-11; “Jesus Loved Them to The End”, Sermon # 70 in the series –
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on November 5th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.**

The Lord Jesus, because He was both God and Man, knew the times for all of the crucial events which would take place during the time of His earthly ministry. This was one of them; His washing His disciples feet. His washing of their feet was not only an action of symbolic significance to them at that time. It was an action of symbolic significance which applies to all of Christ’s disciples in all generations. For it teaches us about Christ’s love for all of us. And it teaches us about our need to show this kind of love to one another.

Before we partake of the Communion, this morning, I would like to open up this phrase – “Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” 1st of all – I want to explain to you some ways in which He had loved them thus far. Then, 2nd – I want to explain the way that He would love them at that present time. And finally, 3rd – I want to explain the ways that He loved them to the end. As Christ loves all who know Him in these same ways, we should receive these truths for the strengthening of our own souls at this time, and on into the future, as we live our life for Him.

1st of all – I want to explain some ways in which the Lord Jesus had loved them thus far.

It says – “Having loved His own who were in the world...” It is indeed wonderful that the Lord Jesus Christ was God the Son before He became a man. He came in time and space in His Incarnation out of His love for sinners like ourselves. We need to remember, that as God the Son, He has loved all of His elect people from before the foundation of the world. In the covenant of redemption in eternity past, He covenanted with the Father to purchase all of their elect people by means of His loving us. It was by means of His coming to this earth and obeying God’s law perfectly on our behalf. It was out of His great love for us, He became obedient to the point of death, by His laying down His life for us at the cross.

The Triune God purposed, He planned most specifically, to have a people, whom Christ here calls – “His own”. It was the Father who chose us in Him (that is, in Christ) even before the world was made. It was out of love that He predestined us to adoption as sons. And then the world was made, and all things were created by these 2 Divine Persons of the Godhead, the Father and the Son, working together with the blessed Holy Spirit, the 3rd Person of the Godhead. I want you to see that the Lord’s love for His apostles whom He chose began in eternity past, but it was shown to them personally in his calling them to follow Him.

When He called Peter and Andrew, and James and John, to leave their fishing and to follow Him, He said to them – Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. This was His love to them, which went with His call to them. When Christ’s love comes to you with power, He gives you a new life. You will remember that when Jesus called Matthew, that he was sitting at the tax office. Jesus simply said to him – Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Why would he do this so suddenly; leave everything and follow Him. It was because Christ’s call was a call of love to him.

It was a effectual call; a call having the power to convince him that he should go with Him. And it was accompanied by irresistible grace. He was able to see the beauty and glory of Christ’s love for him a sinner. That was enough to save him. When Christ told him that he wanted him to follow Him, Matthew knew personally Christ’s love for him immediately. The working of grace was so powerful in His mind and heart, that he did not hesitate. He did not hesitate because his heart had been changed. It says in Mark 2, verse 15, that he invited Jesus to dine at his house that night. And there were many tax collectors and sinners also sitting with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many, and it says that they followed him too. These other tax collectors and sinners were coming to see and to know what Matthew had come to know – that Jesus was the friend of sinners.

Matthew knew that because he was tax collector, and a sinner, that the people of Israel hated him. But not only did Jesus not hate him. He loved him and wanted him to follow Him. Because of this Matthew found that he could respond to Jesus’ call to follow him. Jesus would later say to all of His

apostles in John 15: 9-13 – “As the Father loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.” “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” “Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

And so, each of us must ask ourselves whether we know the love of Christ to us? If you know the love of Christ to you personally, you will respond to His call to follow Him. You will not hear an audible voice. But there will be a still small voice, speaking to you in your heart in connection with the gospel and the word of God. I have laid down my life for you the sinner. I have laid it down for you, so that if you will believe in Me, and My love to you in the gospel, I will save you from your sins. I will give you a new life in which You will know My love very particularly shown to you. So, when the Father sent the Son into the world, He came to His own people, but His own did not know Him. And they did not receive Him. But still, His purpose was not thwarted.

He would chose some among them to be His apostles. And He would choose others, also, among ancient Israel to follow Him, and to walk with Him, and to be His disciples. But even though He knew that many in Israel were to reject Him, still, He knew that by His loving sufferings on the cross, God’s purposes would all be realized. In regard to His elect, His love would prevail and triumph over their initial unbelief and hostility to Him. He would die to bring them grace. They came to know that His redemption was particularly for them. And so, according to God’s purpose, Christ’s love and His grace conquered their hearts.

It was because He loved some among Israel with an everlasting love, that He has saved a remnant in all generations. It is because He loved them, that He will save them as a nation someday in the future. For He says in Jeremiah 31: 1-3 – “At the same time, (the time of the latter days, according to verse 24 of Jeremiah 30), “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” “Thus says the Lord, “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness – Israel, when it went to find its rest.” “The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”

Although these words can be applied to any elect person, Jew or Gentile who believes in Christ, the context shows that the nation of Israel should not be deprived of their glorious future. God knows the plans that He has for everyone who believes in Him. When Jesus called His 12 apostles he said here that they were all clean except one. Eleven of them He had loved with an everlasting love. There was one, Judas Iscariot, who had not responded to the love of Christ, even though he followed Jesus for 3 and a half years. He had a critical spirit concerning the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus.

He had a stronger love in His heart which kept him from thinking deeply about the love of Christ. It was the love of money. The love of money, as the Bible says, is a root of all sorts of evil. And it was at the very time of this supper that Satan cast the thought into Judas’ mind that the chief priests might give him money if he betrayed Him to them. Dear believers, I want you to remember the love of Christ to you personally now. Having loved you, He will love you to the end. Do not think money or any other thing is more important than knowing the love of Christ. But I want you to think with me now, of the humble servant attitude which Jesus exhibited here, in His willingness to wash the disciples feet.

2nd – I want to explain to you the way that He would love them at that present time.

Verse 3 – “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.” “After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” “Then He came to Simon Peter.” “And Peter said to Him, ‘Lord are You washing my feet?’ “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.’ “Peter said to Him, ‘You shall never wash my feet!’ “Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have not part with Me.’ “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.’”

Now, truly, this is a most amazing thing that our Lord Jesus does here. He knows that the Father has given all things into His hands. He knows that He had come from God and was going back to God. He realized that the Father had given to Him all things related to His accomplishing our redemption. He knows that all of the events related to His going to the cross were also in His hands. He was ready, His hour had come. And it was at this very time, then, that Jesus realized that He needed to give to His apostles an object lesson on His being a servant to them in the most personal sense, spiritually. He rose from supper, He laid aside His garments. He took a towel and girded Himself.

And He came first to Peter. Peter saw Him coming, and He couldn't believe it! Lord, are You washing my feet? Jesus wouldn't be deterred by Peter's astonishment. He will explain. What I am doing, Peter, you do not understand now, but you will know after this. Truly this is a saying which we would do well to think upon. Peter could not understand why His Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory, would be stooping to do such a menial task as washing his feet. He objected to it. But not on good grounds, he would find out. Jesus would have to convince him that this washing was absolutely necessary.

I want you to see from this that there are things which Jesus does for us all of us, as Christians, spiritually, that we do not think that he needs to do for us. We, like Peter, will not understand it at first, but we will later on. Peter flat out refused Jesus. "You shall never wash my feet!" Peter thought that it was beneath the dignity of His Lord to do such a thing. He thought to himself – Why would His glorious Lord, the Person who was worthy of all worship as the Son of the Living God, feel that He had to do something like this. He thought, I am very capable of doing this myself!

But as with so many things that Jesus said and did, He was using a literal physical action to describe to the apostles what He must do for them literally spiritually, if they were to come to understand the nature of His ministry to them. It is the nature of Christ's spiritual ministry to us, to wash us and cleanse us from sin's defilement. In verse 8 He says – "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Peter now sees his mistake, and responds exuberantly – Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. He was saying – Whatever you want to do for me Lord, so that I will have part with You, is good and right, and I will most enthusiastically receive it!

Let me ask, dear Christian friends, if this is how you think? You may see your need for Jesus to suffer in your place so that your sins would all be forgiven. As John said in the book of Revelation, chapter 1, verses 4 & 5 – "Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." That is washing us from the guilt of our many sins.

But do you see that Jesus, who was on the verge of going to the cross to die for Peter's sins and ours, was talking about a further washing and cleansing of the heart here in this passage? He says to Peter – "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you. What does Jesus mean when He talks about bathing here? To be bathed is to be born again by water and by the Spirit. It is taking about the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. It is this this washing that makes every believer altogether clean in the sight of God.

This is the washing that was prophesied of in Ezekiel chapter 36, verses 25 & 26 – "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you." "I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." This is what it means to be clean. Jesus knew that Judas was not a regenerate man. He was not clean in his heart and mind. He had not been cleansed by grace. He needed to be washed, and Jesus would wash His feet. But the washing in His case would not avail for him spiritually, for He knew not the love of Christ.

All who are listening to me now, you are either clean, or you are not clean in the sight of God. You have either been bathed and washed with pure water in your spirit; or you have not. If you know that you have, you may come to table and partake of the elements of the body and the blood of Christ. He has died for your sins, and has given you a new heart. As it says in 1st Corinthians 6: 11 – "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit

of God.” Jesus had to go to the cross to purchase these great blessings of our salvation. Come down front and together we will partake of the Supper.

3rd – I want to explain to you the ways that Jesus would love them, and ourselves, to the end.

In verse 10 Jesus said to Peter – “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean.” If the person who has bathed, is completely clean, he only needs to wash his feet. Jesus knew that His apostles, with the exception of Judas, were all clean. They were all regenerate men. They had all been definitively sanctified, born again, and forgiven of all their sins, and given the Holy Spirit. But Jesus’ loving them to the end is showing them that He would need to wash their feet, each and every day of their lives until they died and were brought to heaven, the place where Jesus would remove all sin from their spirits.

This He does for all true believers. The washing of the feet refers to Christ’s washing the dirt and filth of sins that you commit while attempting to walk with Him. He washes away the defilement that you contract to your soul and body while walking through this world. Your dirty feet are due to the indwelling remaining corruption of your heart which does defile your heart and your mind and yes, even your walk with God when you are trying your best to follow Him. Yes, it is true that you are seen by God as altogether clean because of the bathing of regeneration. Every aspect of your being has been cleansed in the giving of the new heart. But there is still much work in sanctification that remains for the true believer all the way through this life.

You may not realize that Christ does have to do this blessed work in your heart each and every day. But He does have to do it. He must wash your feet, or you have no part in Him. The Lord Jesus loves you so much, that He will wash your feet. He will need to be washing you from sinful and evil thoughts that run through your head at times. At times, He may to wash some of us from the filth of greater sins such as sinful anger and pride. He may have to deal with some of us like He did with David when he sinned with Bathsheba and was found committing adultery and murder.

I pray that it will not be so in your case. I pray that you will overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil by the power of His grace and by walking faithfully and carefully with Him. But if the sins of any of us are great, we ought to pray the prayer of David in Psalm 51, verses 1-12 – “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.” “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” “Against You, You only, I have sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” “Behold, You desire truth in the inmost parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” “Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.” “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.” “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

This was the washing of the feet for David at that point in his life. He fell badly into the mud, and had to be hauled out! But I want you to see that if his sins could all be forgiven and his heart and spirit purged, and he could be washed and made clean, whiter than snow, then so may you. As we come to the Table, let us be thankful for Christ’s serving us in this tremendous spiritual way, of washing our feet. Each and every day He washes away of the dirt and filth of our walking through this world. He loves us in this holy way. He washes us when we are not thinking right, like Peter when he denied him. Let us be willing to say – Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head! Let us be thankful that our loving Savior will show us His love in His serving us in this way. And let us pray to receive it, realizing that we cannot make progress in righteousness and holiness without it. But with it, we will!

