

24 Hours – The Last Supper

24 Hours

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Crossroad Ministries

P.O. Box 1356

Grapevine, Tx 76099

Website: www.firstbaptistconyers.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

It has been right at a year where we as a church body decided to have this audacious statement, this crazy concept that we would put forth not only in our personal lives, but in our families' lives, in our church's lives and in our community's life, this simple phrase: Change the world, start here.

It is audacious and it is very personal. It is on the worship guide that you got this morning. It is on the banners that are around the campus. It is on the t-shirts that go to foreign countries in the mission field and on mission trips. And when we think about that phrase, "Change the world, start here," and we take a survey of the last 12 to 18 months of this church's life and you begin to think of some of the things that have happened as a church body over 1200 individuals go through a 14 week discipleship course where they learn how to prioritize their life according to the Word of God with the resources that God has given them and how to become not a consumer of all that the world is, but a missionary to all the world needs to hear. The fact that in the last 12 months more individuals, more families from this church body went on a mission endeavor, a mission trip than in any other year in the history of its 175 year existence. The fact that we minister to the shelters in downtown Atlanta providing literally thousands and thousands of blue jeans, a necessity physically but, more importantly, a gospel message in the pocket. And now recently having delivered almost 10,000 pairs of shoes literally all over the world, not only for feet that need to be covered, but for hearts who need the message of Jesus. You begin to look at all that stuff and you begin to think, wow, that can be, that could be, that could possibly be world changing. Whether it is a discipleship course, a pair of a jeans, a pair of shoes or even a trip to build a house in a foreign country, understand that every one of those deeds is for naught if what we are going to talk about this spring has not been applied to our lives.

You know, everybody today wants to see the world change. In fact, that is a word that is used to so often in so many different arenas. But let me share with you the difference between our statement and the majority of the world's statement. It is because of what we are going to talk about today it can actually happen with us. In other words, everybody wants change. Everybody is promising change. But as we will see in must a moment,

only one person truly delivered change. And his name is, was and will always be Jesus Christ.

And if we take a survey of the world's timeframe, from Adam and Eve to you and me, taking a biblical chronology, there have been approximately 2.5 million days. If we wanted to narrow that focus just to the life of Jesus Christ as a physical human being God in flesh about 12,000 days. But whether you take 2.5, whether you take 12,000 there has never been a day as critical as the last 24 hours in the life of Jesus.

As we will see in just a moment, beginning in what we know as the last supper, the Passover meal, in John 13 to the point at which his body is taken off the cross by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Over the course of this spring we are going to take an entire spring to focus on 24 hours that changed the world, because if we get this, we can do what the statement says. We can do what the banner says. We can see the world change starting here because the only one who can bring real change has given us the message of change in the Word of God.

As you turn to John chapter 13 one of the aspects of the gospel that I so appreciate and love is they come from multiple perspectives, but they come to one climactic event, what we know as the cross. The gospel of John, where we begin today... By the way, over the course of the next week to months we will be in all four of the gospels. We will be in Matthew next week as we look at these different events in the life of Jesus over a 24 hour time period. The gospel of John, where we start today, only seven percent of the material in the gospel of John can be found in the other three gospels. In fact, all the gospels, as you read them in a very cursory manner, they look very different at times until you get to the last week of Jesus. You may not realize it. The gospel of Luke has 24 chapters in it. The last 12 chapters, the last half of Luke encompasses the last week in the life of Jesus. The gospel of John has five chapters dedicated to a 24 hour time period. The Holy Spirit who inspired the words of God, what we know as the Bible today, understood that of the 12,000 days of Jesus, of the three and a half year ministry of Jesus, this is the day that we need to understand more than any other day. This is the day we need to grasp more than any other, because beginning with about seven o'clock in the evening, the night before Jesus' crucifixion, what we know as the Passover meal, the last supper, the clock begins to tick. And for the next 24 hours decisions will be made, statements will be made and ultimately eternity for you and I, forgiveness and sin will hang in the balance in the person of whom we know as Jesus Christ.

Beginning at John chapter 13 verse one.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and

girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.¹

Now to be quite frank and honest with you, this passage of Scripture has within it at least four to five different messages, four to five different Bible study sermons that we could draw out from it, but really there is really three simple things that I want us to grasp today as we begin a journey of 24 hours. This last supper, this Passover was the last event where the disciples would be all together in a very calm environment. In just a moment they are going to leave after Jesus washes their feet. They are going to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, which we will study next week, and then things get crazy. You have got Peter cutting off a guy's ears. You have got 500 guys falling backwards. You have got Jesus in prison. You have got Peter denying and cussing and screaming and yelling and everybody is fleeing except for John. This is the last calm before the 24 hour storm in every one of these guys' lives.

And what do we see that takes place in John chapter 13? Three very simple things and I think the first one that we need to address to really grasp what Jesus is trying to get across is there is a very unexpected procedure that takes place in John 13. This unexpected procedure has two aspects: the protocol of the foot washing and the person who was doing it.

Let's begin with the protocol. You and I do not live in the cultural days of Jesus, obviously. We have the benefit of the combustion engine, the benefit of cars, the benefit of shoes that are fully covered. We have the benefit of running water and showers and all of those nice things that for most of us unless you are a young boy whose last name is Meyers, keeps us somewhat smelling decent, or you have junior high students.

Nonetheless, in Jesus' day, they walked in the desert with open toed sandals. The desert, mind you, it is hot. It is stuffy. It is a dusty, dirty environment. And here were men who by trade were fishermen of the day. And yet they would have been walking all the day

¹ John 13:1-15.

long. This dinner, this meal would have began about five o'clock in the evening. They had a day's worth of dust, a day's worth of sweat on them. And they come to a home.

Now if we were to go back a little bit in the gospel message we would discover that this was the home of a very wealthy individual. Why? Because it had an upper chamber. It was not a single floor house. It was a two story house. And if you have been to the Middle East, that is a very big deal. They go to a large upper room that has been prepared for the Passover meal. They have eaten their meal. Supper has been ended according to this passage and then there is an event where feet are washed.

Let me tell you why this was unexpected. In the protocol of Jesus' day the feet, the dirtiest part of the body were washed upon entering the home. Now we can chase some theological rabbits today and if, guys, you want to do that, show up on Tuesday morning at 6:15. That is what we major in on Tuesday morning. But there is two lines of thought here. Either, A) the servant of the rich man's house had already washed their feet from the dirt, the grime and the sweat and what Jesus was doing was merely for illustrative purposes, or whoever owned this house, whoever's servants would have naturally been assigned to the house, because Jesus was, quote, taking the house over this evening, they were not present to do the, quote, foot washing.

Nonetheless, these men have eaten the Passover meal. They celebrated together the most unexpected thing they could have ever imagined at this point in the evening was having something done that they would have done on the bottom floor by somebody different, which brings up the person. I mentioned that this was a wealthy man's house. Why? He had a large upper room. The job of foot washing was relegated for a lack of a better term to the lowest on the social strata tier, the lowest of lows washed feet.

You say, "Well, why is that?"

You should have been at my house about 11 o'clock in the morning yesterday when all three of my boys had completed a soccer game and took their shoes off and what we would call the mud room of our house. The stench was ... and they had had a bath the night before. They had not played soccer in the dirt. They actually had socks on and covered shoes on and yet the smell that erupted made the dog go to the other side of the house. It is incredible what these guys can do.

Nobody wants to be around that, much less the owner of the house. That is one of those positions where when one finds the financial resources and the wherewithal that they hopefully in the Jesus culture can relegate to somebody else, who was Jesus in these men's lives? He wasn't just the owner of a house, because he didn't own this house. He wasn't just... this was a man, listen. In the culture of his day, do you realize he was probably the most famous individual in Jerusalem that day? Just days earlier with what we know as Palm Sunday he had come riding in and literally the Bible says tens of thousands of people hailed him as King of the Jews. This was the man who overturned the tables and created the gossip story of the year. This was a man that over 70 individuals in the Sanhedrin were plotting at the time to have him murdered and killed.

All the political leaders knew exactly who he was. All of the commoners knew exactly who he was. All of the commoners knew exactly who he was. All of the royalty knew exactly who he was. This wasn't just a man who had been with them three and a half years. This wasn't just the man that they had professed to be Messiah. This wasn't just a man who they said, "You are the Son of God." This was the most popular, most well known individual in the city that night. And he gets down on his knees and takes the job of a servant.

You want to talk about unexpected. When this event took place, it would have been a marvelous experience. It would have been a mind blowing experience. Anybody who would have been in that room would have been completely shocked and dismayed at what they were seeing, which leads to the second aspect.

It wasn't just an unexpected procedure. What Jesus does in John chapter 13, he gives us an unbelievable picture in two levels. The first one is he gives us an unbelievable picture that is an absolute surprise. And the reason I bring this up is you look at the very first verse.

"Now before the feast of the passover..."²

If you have never had the privilege of being at a Passover meal, we as a church are going to give you a little taste of that on April the first. I know April first is technically April Fool's Day. I am not fooling you when I tell you this. We are actually going to have an organization here, Jews for Jesus, who is going to be leading us in a procedure as Christ in the Passover, showing us all the prophecies and all the pictures of Jesus Christ in the Passover meal.

But if you were to sit down to a traditional Jewish family Passover meal, it is not like meals in our family where it is between school and soccer practice, 30 minutes, you are in and you are out. It is a good two and a half, three hour experience. All people participate.

But what is so critical about the Jewish Passover meal is that it is a celebration of an end. It is a celebration of an end. The Jewish Passover meal celebrates the exodus of the Jewish people from what we know as Egypt under Pharaoh's tutelage and care. It wasn't very careful, but nonetheless 400 years of slavery.

When a Jewish family celebrates the Passover meal, whether it was in Moses' day, whether it was in Jesus' day or whether it was in your day, it is a celebration of an end, that the tyranny of the slavery of Egypt has ended, that that which we long to be done is ended. Everything is about that which has taken past and one of the things that they do at a Passover meal that is so unique is they actually set a place empty, a vacant place, a seat that is empty, a place that is empty, a glass that is empty with the hopes that Elijah will come, that what they know as the turmoil of this earth will be over. Persecution by the government will be over. Persecution by their faith will be over, that slavery will end,

² John 13:1.

that bigotry will end, that injustice will end. And when Elijah shows up that means the Messiah will sit on his throne and the new day is dawned and everything old is overridden.

See, when a Jewish family celebrates Passover, they come to it with the expectation that the end is here, that it is over, no longer toiling, no longer struggling in the sin of this world. But here is this surprise in this passage. Jesus tells them, “You don’t know what I am doing, but you will later.”

In other words Jesus makes it very clear, “Guys, Elijah is not coming and it is not over.”

He says at the very end, “What I have done for you, you need to do to other also.”

It was earlier where Jesus passed the cup and he passed the bread and he said, “This [?] is the new testament of my blood. Drink it continually until I come.”

In other words, what Jesus said that was such a surprise to these guys is tonight was not the end. It was actually the beginning. See, what they had hoped in the Jewish faith is that moments later Jesus would walk out of that room, walk into the temple mount, shut everybody down and take over. The Romans would be banished. The governments would be banished and a theocracy would take place.

And what Jesus communicated is: This isn’t the end. This is actually the beginning. I have not come to reign on the earth at this time. He will one day. But I have come to reign in men and women’s hearts.

It would have been a complete surprise. It would have been unbelievable to take this sacred meal, this unbelievable celebration of Jewish culture, Jewish faith and to turn it completely upside down. But it wasn’t just unbelievable because of that, it was unbelievable because of the picture that Jesus gave these disciples.

Now I want you to look in verse four of John chapter 13. It says that Jesus rose from supper. He laid aside his garments. He took a towel and he girded himself. And then there is the famous washing of the feet experience.

Now I want you to look at verse 12. So after he had washed their feet and had taken his garments, he was set down and he said, “Do you know what I have done to you?”

Now, folks, Jesus at times confessed that the disciples were slow. He said, “You are weak of faith. You are slow of heart.” But I want you to know that every man in that room knew that their feet had been washed. And so when Jesus says, “Do you know what I have done to you?” what Jesus is telling us is he is saying, “Guys, there is something bigger here that you do not want to miss.”

After all, when they leave this room, in the next 24 hours, you realize that just one

chapter earlier in chapter 12 verse 27 Jesus said, “This is my hour. This is why I have come, to bear the sins of humanity.”

So what was the unbelievable picture that Jesus gave for them? Well, if we start in verse four he rises from supper, lays aside his garments takes a towel, girds himself, washes their feet, verse 12, gets up, puts his garments on and sits down again.

Let me tell you about an unbelievable picture in John 13. Not just a picture of a surprise with the Passover meal, but it gives us a picture of salvation. For what Jesus did in that room that night, what he did among those men was, yes, washing of feet, but if we will take a step back, he was giving them a picture of the totality not only of his ministry, but what they could experience with the cross.

Let me show you what I mean. Before the incarnation, before what we know as Christmas, before Jesus was born of flesh of a virgin. According to the Bible he has forever always been, will be and shall be hereafter. Where was he? Residing in the heavenly throne. What did he have access to? He had access to the praises of the angels, the praises of the saints. He was in the throne room and if you want a little glimpse of what this might have looked like, just go to Ezekiel one or Revelation chapter five. It is a wild picture of what the throne room of God could somewhat look like to our natural sense. He is there enjoying all the fellowship that the throne room of God would have. And then some 12,000 days before this event, he sheds the garments of heaven. He laid aside the praise of the angels. He laid aside the glory of heaven. He laid aside the crystal sea. He laid aside all the rainbows, the thunderings, the lightnings and all the things the Bible describes. He laid aside those garments and when he entered into earth as a human being, God in flesh, the veiled incarnate deity as we sing at Christmas time, what did he do? Did he wear the crown of a king, the robe of purple? According to verse four what did he do?

He took a towel and he girded himself.

Mark chapter 10 verse 44 and 45 says that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Those who were sick in need of healing, he served him. Those who needed a word to get through the day, he gave it to them. Those who were without hope, he served them with hope. Those that needed whatever it was they needed on a spiritual level, he served them. He came as a servant and he washed feet.

Now what is interesting in the study of John chapter 13 is who was present. Everybody. Peter was there. John the beloved who leaned up against Jesus was there and so was Judas. Judas doesn't even leave until verse 26 of this passage. Even the feet of the one who would betray him. He left that glories of heaven to put his nose in the toes of a man who would sell him for a few pieces of silver. And then what happens? This is what is unbelievable. He gets up, puts on his garments again and sits down. That is what we celebrate at Easter, that Jesus rose from the dead. And it is a lot different story on the

other side of the resurrection. The disciples are in the upper room and they are praying and wondering. All of the sudden Jesus just appears. It didn't happen on this side of the resurrection. He is on the road to Emmaus. He has dinner with some guys. He breaks bread. All of the sudden he is gone.

The Bible records in Acts chapter one that 40 days after his resurrection that he ascended on high with two angels side by side. Let me tell you about Jesus right now. He is wearing the garments. In fact, when John sees him in Revelation one there is a white garment that goes from head to toe, a majestic garment, a heavenly garment, a godly garment. And listen, according to the Bible he is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for you and I which means he can absolve and forgive your sin. What he did was more than just wash feet. He said, "Guys, let me take the last three and a half years of our life together and let me sum this up. I used to be in the throne room. I came down and served you and I got in the dirtiness of your life. But I am going to put on the garments again and I am going to sit down again."

And he concludes by saying, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

You wonder why only one was at the cross in John chapter 19 and the rest went scattering. One of the things that I love that he told Peter is he said, "Peter," this is in verse seven. "You don't know what I do now, but you will know later. You are going to miss it tonight, because before the cock crows three times," and we will study this in a few weeks, "you are going to deny me, but you will understand this later."

Unbelievable surprise at a Passover mount, unbelievable picture of salvation and the unexpectedness of the unbelievableness. This leads us to a climax in this passage of some undeniable problems that you and I have to address. And the first undeniable problem, in fact, we cannot deny this even though we try to is this: that we are dirty people. Humanity is dirty. Even Peter had dirt on his feet. The apostle John had dirt on his feet. And when you look at the disciples, there are so many who you would rather not be like. Can we just begin with Judas? Can we begin with Thomas who, by the way, eight days after the resurrection finally shows up to the upper room and says, "I guess I will give this one a try." It was Thomas who we call doubting. It was Bartholomew who doubted under the tree. Yet it was John who stayed faithful to the cross. It was James who was there in the end. It was Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration in the Garden of Gethsemane. And yet here in this passage did Jesus only wash the feet of Judas? No. Did Jesus only wash the feet of the big three? No. The picture that Jesus is giving us is this. The first undeniable problem that we must accept is that we are dirty people with dirty lives. And the Bible calls that sin. It is a simple word that means a lot of different things, to miss the mark, to transgress, to trespass or, in this context, to be dirty.

You know, we are real good in humanity of cleaning up the outside. But one of the things Jesus did is he exposed the inside. The Bible says that every one of us has sinned. The Bible says that because of sin, according to Romans 6:23 the wages of the result of sin is death. The Bible makes it very clear that the saintliest of saints are dirty. And the

most horrid of criminals are dirty. In fact, James chapter two basically says don't get excited. This is the new revised Jeff version. Don't get excited if your sin looks better than your neighbors, because you are both bad. And one of the undeniable problems that we have got to accept as a people today is that we are messed up, that we are dirty folks who need a Savior. We are dirty. No matter how we try to clean it up, no matter how much we try to perfume it up, make it smell good and look good, we can do everything we want to on the outside, but listen to what Peter says.

Peter says, "No, no, no, no, no. I am not dirty."

See, that is the second problem we have got to deal with. Not only have we become a people who need to understand that we are sinful, dirty people, but we do a really good job of denying that we need help. Peter said, "Not me."

See, there is two sides of this equation that I see people on all the time and you are probably either on one of the extremes or somewhere in the middle. One side of the equation I meet people all the time who think their life is so messed up, so dirty, their past is so horrid that Jesus couldn't love them. There is no way that the message of the gospel could be true of their life.

I have got some words of encouragement for you. How about the woman who was caught in adultery. Jesus said, "I forgive you. Go and sin no more."

How about the Gentile woman who talked about the crumbs below the table? There is case after case after case. In fact, we could go to the apostle Paul who was a murderer and yet we see in this passage Judas had his feet washed by the Lord. There is nothing you have ever done, could do or even think that could somehow any way keep you from the love of Christ Jesus to save you and forgive you. Do not fall for that lie. But don't fall for the other lie either, that you can be good enough that you don't need a Savior.

Peter said, "Lord, I am good, right?"

And he says, "No, Peter, you are not."

You are not good either. And one of the things that we tend to do is we begin to do what I call comparative theology.

You have heard the old joke, right? And it is a good one, that if you were to take all the problems of people and put them on the table, you would always take yours back. That is a good analogy. It makes people appreciate what they are dealing with in life, because I don't want to be dealing with what they are dealing with. But one of the things we need to see is when we take everybody's life and we put it on the table, when we hear what some people are doing and we read it on Facebook and see it in the newspaper, we go, "Wow, I am pretty good compared to that."

No, you are not.

And we deny that we need a Savior.

Let me tell you what our culture has got really bad at. We are inventing new ways every day to accept the fact that we don't need a Savior. If we will just learn more, get a better education, we will be ok. If we just experience more, if we just possess more. We [?] all kind of concepts and ways to avoid the fact that we are dirty people who cannot clean up ourselves. And one of the things that we are great at in our culture is trusting ourselves to clean up our own mess.

According to this passage Jesus said, "No, no. You need someone who has been in the throne room, who has stepped out, girded themselves with a towel to wash your dirty, not just feet, but hearts."

One of the things that Jesus showed these guys in verse 12. He said, "Guys, do you even know what I have done to you?"

What Jesus pictured for them was the undeniable problem that we are a dirty people and we desperately, desperately need him to forgive us and save us. And yet we live in a culture that is dominated by churches and by religions and by faith. And I want to begin this series by asking a very important question. With all that you know and with all that you have experienced, have you personally understood that in the eyes of God and compared to the Bible your life is dirty? And then have you asked Jesus to clean it up? Because if you have yet to do that, if you have yet to allow Jesus to clean up your life, then you will not get what Jesus offered in the cross and that is a changed world starting right there. Jesus said, "I will change your world. Where you have got dirt, I will clean it up. Where you have got a futile future, I will give you a fruitful future." Jesus said, "Where everything is old and messed up, I will make you a new creation." Jesus said, "I will change your world and I will start right here."

The question is: Have you allowed him to change your world?