

## Gospel of John Chapter 13A

John 13:1 **Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

- The same love with which he chose them, the same love with which he taught them he continues to display all the way to the cross which is the utmost expression of His love.
- (TELOS) To completion, to the conclusion, (A.T. Robertson) “to the utmost”
- This is a fitting introduction to events of Jesus’ final day.

“**HE Loved Them.**” Here in the Gospel of John the word “Love” is used 6 times in the first 12 chapters. BUT when we arrive at chapters 13-17, Jesus takes his disciples aside for one last day of intense preparation; here the word “Love” is used 31 times.

It is in that LOVE, Jesus teaches, corrects, and endures the disciple’s childishness.

- Recently I have closely observed my sons and daughters in-law as they diligently labor to train their own children.
- When the grands are ALL together there are 5 under the age of 4.
- My kids break up innumerable scuffles throughout the course of a day. They love their kids to the end.
- As we observe the events of the Last Supper the disciples are acting like 4 year olds.

This morning I have 2 points to consider as we meditate on John chapter 13:

1. Greatness Disputed
2. Greatness Displayed

### 1. Greatness Disputed:

In documenting the events of this final night Luke adds one detail that I think is important in understanding the context of John’s narrative.

- Luke tells us that during the evening a dispute arose among the disciples:

Luke 22:24 **A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.**

- You should know that this was not the first time the Disciples of Christ argued over which one of them was the greatest.

Mark 9:33 **And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. 35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”**

- WHY did the issue of GREATNESS arise here at the Passover meal?
- I believe the issue arose as the disciples jockeyed for positions around the table.
- WHO would get to sit in the prominent places next to the Lord Jesus?
- We have this issue at home because Maple wants to sit next to grandpa at the dinner table.
- This was not the first time the disciples jockeyed for position.

Mark 10:35 **And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” (SAY YES MOM!)**

36 **And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” 37 And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”**

Mark 10: 41 **And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.**

42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- It is this great TRUTH that Jesus would demonstrate in front of his disciples on this his last Passover evening with them: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- Jesus will end the dispute over “Greatness” with a display of true greatness.

## 2. Greatness Displayed

John 13:2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,

4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- In order to grasp the true beauty and significance of this demonstration, John first stresses the exaltation of Christ in verse 3 before expressing the depth of his humility.
- 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.
- Fully aware of his identity, knowing his divine origin and his coming exaltation to the right hand of the Father. Facing the cross he was not moved but remained in control.
- Jesus willingly takes the form of a servant as a display of divine love.
- Understanding his glory makes his humility that much more astounding!

NOTICE verse 4 which tells us, *Jesus laid aside his outer garments and gird himself with a towel.* THIS is significant!

- This is a masterful picture portraying how Jesus set aside the glory he enjoyed for all of eternity past and put on the form of a servant for the purpose of dying in our place.

Philippians 2: 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant,

- The glory of God which is the grand expression of his divinity is wonderfully displayed through his servanthood.

To fully comprehend the humility of the Lord Jesus we need to consider the social protocol that was present in the Jewish households of Jesus’ day.

- After walking, all day through the dusty streets of Jerusalem at a time when 200,000 sheep were being walked to the temple, washing the feet was a mandatory practice.
- BUT the washing of feet was considered a menial task.
  - The Law stated that Jewish slaves were not required to wash feet the task could be delegated to the lowest of gentile slaves.
- You should note that Jesus ROSE FROM SUPPER *and took up the basin and the towel.*

- The washing of feet would normally have taken place BEFORE the guests sat down. This means that NONE of the disciples, arguing over who was the greatest were willing to humble themselves and wash one another's feet.
  - BUT Jesus arose from supper:

John 13:5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

- All of the other disciples simply sat and allowed the Lord to wash their feet but not Peter, He strongly objected.
  - There is no way he was going to allow Jesus to serve him like a common slave.
- 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

- The whole PURPOSE for Christ divesting himself of his glory and GIRDING himself in the form of a servant was for OUR CLEANSING.
- The ONLY way that we can possibly share in Christ's fellowship with the Father is if we submit to the cleansing from sin that He provides.
- If you refuse Christ's cleansing, in essence you are choosing to retain your sin and remain separated from God and under his wrath.
- The prophet Isaiah foretold this gracious cleansing:

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Both Old and New Testament declare that this cleansing comes through faith in God's promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Paul write of this cleansing to the believers at Corinth.

- After delineating an extensive list of their previous sins including sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, thievery and greed, Paul declared:

1Co 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Now, When Peter considered the consequence of rejecting the cleansing that the Lord offered he quickly changed his tune. Jesus said: "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

- This is the Peter that we know and love, in keeping with impulsive nature he quickly moves from one extreme to another.
- OK Lord, if you want to wash me I'll take everything you are offering, forget my feet give me a "Gospel Bath!"

10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

- What is Jesus talking about? Is this a message on personal hygiene? (Leviticus)

John Mac: "IN physical terms those who have already bathed do not need to take a bath every time their feet get dirty. They need only to Wash their feet because they are completely clean. Similarly the complete cleansing of the redeemed at salvation never needs to be repeated. God has graciously justified and imputed the righteousness of Christ to the believer and His atoning

death provides complete forgiveness of all their sins. But they still need the daily cleansing for sanctification from the defilement of sin that remains in them.”

- Remember I taught you that Salvation is: AN Event, followed by a process, followed by an event.
- We HAVE been cleansed (justified, through faith in J.C. when we were made alive)
- We are BEING cleansed (sanctified – daily set apart from sin as we look to the cross)
- We WILL BE cleansed (glorified – when we set aside these fleshly bodies)

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Those who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, who have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and been adopted into the family of God, THEY ARE EMPOWERED by the Holy Spirit to follow His example and to DO to others what Christ has done to them.

- Jesus now moves into the moral application of his example.

IMPORTANT: When churches teach moral application without the Gospel, it is like training a monkey to act like a man.

- He may be able to perform a few tricks that look like a man but at heart he is still a monkey.

When the EXAMPLE of Christ is separated from the SACRIFICE of Christ we are left with an impotent morality that cannot save anyone.

- BUT when His people (Born of the Spirit) live for His glory, sacrificially serving one another in the humility that comes by the Spirit THEN the love of Christ is manifest through the church and Jesus is made known.
- As believers we need to HEED the exhortation given by the Apostles:

Philippians 2:1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

1 Peter 5:5, Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

- Peter tells us just as Christ clothed himself with a towel and served his disciples, we are to clothe ourselves with humility toward one another.

The Greek word translated as humility literally means lowliness of mind, or humble mindedness. Humility is the grace of lowliness, the virtue of modesty that considers others more significant than ourselves.

The humble person sees himself or herself in right perspective before an infinite, perfect, glorious creator Redeemer God and as a servant to others.

- Do you KNOW God in this way? Do you have a right view of his holiness and glory?
- How does your view of God cause you to view yourself?
- When you see yourself in the light of God's glory, it is easier to give grace around you.

#### ALEXANDER STRAUCH QUOTE

“Counting others more significant than yourselves means not being preoccupied with ourselves and our needs. It means that we serve others, with their needs ahead of our own, promote their advancement, and bear one another's burdens. Unity is best accomplished among those who have a humble mind and a servant's heart. If we are to avoid conflict in our churches and in our homes and handle it properly when it occurs, we must be humble, Christ centered people, not those who are concerned with our own self-centered ego.”