

June 14, 2015
Sunday Morning Service
Series: John
Community Baptist Church
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from John 13:1-11.

1. Describe how the devil put betraying Jesus into Judas' heart.
2. What Old Testament prophecies did Jesus fulfill when He did the work of a servant?
3. What did Jesus mean by the use of the word "clean" in this story?
4. At what point do you believe the disciples were truly born again?

MOST OF YOU ARE CLEAN John 13:1-11

At this point an obvious change occurs in John's record of Jesus' ministry. Up to this place in the account, John has given many details about Jesus' teaching and debates with the people and the rulers. He has recorded eight specific miracles. John wrote all of these things to prove that Jesus is the Christ so that people will believe Him and repent of their sins (John 20:31).

Beginning here in chapter thirteen through the end of the book, John recorded Jesus' intimate discussions with the disciples and the lessons He taught them leading up to, through and subsequent to, His death and resurrection.

The first conversation and lesson takes place in the setting of the disciples' observing the Passover meal with Jesus in a room

located above a home some place in Jerusalem. Traditionally the place has been called the Upper Room and the meal has been identified as the Seder or Passover meal.

The important point for us to learn is the line of demarcation Jesus drew between the disciples and the world and even between eleven disciples and Judas the betrayer. This theme of conflict and contrast begins with the story of our text where Jesus washed the disciples' feet and essentially continues through the rest of the book. Here we are reminded that there is a difference between the followers of Christ and the people of the world, a difference between the clean disciples and the unclean one, and an obvious difference between those who believe Jesus and those who do not. It is the purpose of John's Gospel to highlight those differences.

We will be challenged again as we study through this well-known story to consider our own relationship with Christ. Are we spiritually clean or are we associated with Jesus Christ for the wrong reasons? In the opening words of John's Gospel, he promised that there would ultimately be two responses to Jesus the Savior. Either people would reject Him (1:11) or they would believe Him, receive Him as their Savior, and become children of God (1:12). Which response has been yours?

Out of This World—In This World (vv.1-5).

Jesus was departing out of this world but leaving the disciples in the world (v.1). On the night of the Passover meal, Jesus confessed to the disciples that the hour had come for Him to depart this world. *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father (v.1a).*

The time statement (*before the Feast of the Passover*) refers to Passover meal. This was a most special celebration for the Jews. It still is for devout Jews. God commended this observation at the first Passover, requiring His people to remember it for endless generations. It all goes back to the event when God delivered the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt and sent the death angel over the land. The death angel killed the firstborn person in each house where there was not the sign of the blood splattered on the door frames. The blood came from a sacrificed lamb which the obedient

people sacrificed according to God's instruction. The innocent lamb's blood protected the people from destruction. After the family had sacrificed the lamb, they ate a meal together consisting of the roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.

This was all a picture of the great deliverance that the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, would one day provide so that people who trust and obey Him will be delivered from the destruction of eternal punishment because of sin. Now, according to the timing in John's account, it was time for Jesus to fulfill the promise of that picture. He would observe the traditional eating of the meal with His disciples. He would go to the cross and shed His blood to pay the penalty for His people's sins. He would be buried, but then rise on Sunday morning. He would meet with His followers for 40 days and then depart this world to enter heaven.

Mission Accomplished! His own people are the benefactors. John pointed out that Jesus loved His followers who would remain in the world. He was ready to depart, *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (v. 1b)*. The people who chose to follow Jesus are His own. In this case, His own in particular were eleven of twelve disciples. And so are we. We are the ones who the Father has drawn to the Son (6:44). He will raise us up in the last day (6:44b). We have heard and learned from the Father and have come to Jesus (6:45).

Regarding people like us Jesus will pray: *"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours"* (John 17:9). Jesus not only prays for us, but He prays because Jesus loves us who are His own. The disciples and we are the reason He came into this world to die. We know the love of Christ through His actions for our benefit.

But while we are deeply encouraged to be reminded that Jesus loves us, it is interesting to note that nowhere in the Gospels is there a record where Jesus said to an individual, "I love you." He often challenged the disciples to love Him and to love God. He loved the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21). He taught that God loves the world (John 3:16). He loved Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (John 11:3-36). He was known to have loved the unnamed disciple (John, 13:23; 19:26; 21:7).

Though there is no record that Jesus ever stated the words, still we are assured in this text that Jesus loves His own. Jesus loves every single person the Father draws to Him. He loves us and He leaves us in the world. The term "world" shows up thirty-one times in 13:1 - 18:37. That context covers a matter of hours from the supper to Jesus' trial before Pilate. All of those uses of the word *world* almost exclusively contrast the world with Christ's followers and His Kingdom.

The lesson Jesus taught us is this: People who follow Christ are not like other people in the world. People who follow Christ will not be acceptable to other people in the world. Then why are we here? In a nutshell, Christ leaves us in the world so that by living distinct lives we call attention to God. By forcing people to consider God, we will help them realize God's authority over them and love for them. That, in turn, gives us opportunity to tell them about our Master Jesus who we live to serve.

Then there was Judas. He was left in this world because he was strongly attached to this world. *During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him (v. 2)*. Here we learn that Satan inspired Judas to betray Jesus. But that does not give a pass on responsibility to Judas. On the one hand, Judas was disappointed with Jesus' plans for the kingdom. He certainly thought that he had joined the band of followers because Messiah setting up the kingdom was a great idea. No doubt he had longed for this like so many other Jewish people had. No doubt Jesus' miracles and authoritative teaching led Judas to believe that this man from Nazareth was the promised king who would come. Therefore, Judas cast his lot with this leader and joined the other eleven followers.

What Judas didn't understand was that Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth, actually chose him and drew him into this relationship. *Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil"* (John 6:68-70). Jesus arranged a meeting, a crossing of paths, so that Judas would fall in line with God's will in this particular matter.

Judas was culpable because he decided to follow Jesus and while following Him grew disenchanted. The rest of the story is history.

But there is another part to the story. On the other hand, Satan had been looking for a willing vessel to use. Make no mistake – Satan hates God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Satan knows full well the outcome of God’s plan to redeem the fallen creation. Satan understood perfectly that God the Son would have to become human and die in obedience to God’s law in order to provide the price for redemption. Satan would do all that is possible to keep Jesus from redeeming the creation. He tried to kill Him as a baby through Herod’s slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-18). He tried to get Him to disobey the Father by yielding to his temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). He tried to get Him to abandon the cross idea by yielding to human weakness and fear in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46). Maybe Satan’s last attempt was to tempt Jesus to come down from the cross and destroy His personal enemies (Matt. 27:41-44).

But there is a tragedy in subtle human rebellion plus rebellion supercharged by Satan. Judas sat at supper filled with the devil’s influence. He would observe and celebrate the picture of the innocent lamb’s blood slain for sin while having a sinful heart. It is similar to the fact that multitudes of religious people sit in church services week after week with hearts just as sinful as Judas’ heart while pretending to worship Jesus Christ.

Again just the other day I learned that a man who had occupied a significant position of service in the Lord’s work proved to be like Judas. He had served faithfully in leadership positions for many years—or so it appeared. What was not known during those years was that the man was squandering money on prostitutes—money that had been entrusted to him to do God’s work. Eventually his sin was discovered. Obviously, the man was turned out of the ministry, eventually bankrupted his family, took the last \$100 the family had, got in his car drove as far as he could go on that money, parked the car, and today is a homeless man wandering through the cities.

We wonder how such a person was able to keep up the appearance of serving God for so long. Ask Judas. He knew how to do that. He was a part of “this world.”

In the setting of that very special supper, Jesus did what was considered “out of this world” (vv.3-5). We must acknowledge that Jesus was the leader at the meal. It was Jesus who had instructed the disciples regarding the finding of the proper room and preparing the meal. In carrying out Jesus’ instructions, they, in contrast, acted like servants. Listen to the plan. *Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover*” (Matthew 26:17-19). Jesus was obviously in charge.

Furthermore, Jesus directed the meal as the host. In doing this He certainly played the part of the Master. Matthew told us what it looked like. *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you”* (Matthew 26:26-27).

By all normal expectations in this setting, the host would have directed his servants to take care of the expected and menial tasks. This would include washing the guest’s feet. In reality, everyone at this meal other than Jesus was a servant. Indeed, Jesus was the host, the Master, the Lord of the universe. He was in control of all circumstances. *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* (v.3). He knew that He was the Creator. He knew that He had control of all the circumstances necessary to redeem His fallen creation. He knew that He was going to complete the work and return to the perfect, sinless paradise of heaven. Jesus was in charge.

Throughout human history people have imagined gods, goddesses, and super heros who are so powerful they control nature and the supernatural. Here is the most extreme example of a God being in control of every detail of the universe. But it is not a legend or story or the product of human imagination. This man owned the authority to control all circumstances according to His desire.

But notice that while Jesus was being the leader who was in control, He demonstrated servant-hood (vv.4-5). He took on the

garments of a servant. Jesus *rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist (v.4)*. The disciples had to be shocked as they watched Jesus lay aside His outer garment and dress Himself like a servant. We are shocked to watch the Creator God clothe Himself like a servant.

This was simply a vivid illustration of what God the Son had already done in the spiritual realm. *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8)*. This is no pretense, no attempt at the spectacular, no appeal to emotions. This is God the Son demonstrating Isaiah's promise that He was the perfect Servant of Jehovah.

Therefore, we should not be surprised to see Jesus doing the work of a servant in this setting. *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 (v.5)*. It is likely that the youngest of the disciples or the least esteemed should have washed the feet of the others. Already they were all seated at the table ready for the meal. In a moment of awkwardness, Jesus Himself rises to do the work of the servant that no one else would do.

It was awkward, but Jesus understood that He was a servant. Isaiah had promised that He would be a servant. *It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6)*. Therefore, Jesus had explained this to the disciples. At an earlier time Jesus had taught, *"For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27)*.

As usual, the disciples were slow to hear and slower to grasp the truth. Jesus again drew the picture slowly and plainly so they could get it. *"Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them" (Luke 12:37)*. They knew this truth. And so they sat like proud and

arrogant followers of the future king of Israel. There they sat like us, while Jesus rose and served them.

In Jesus—Out of Jesus (vv.6-11).

The Perfect Servant of God also taught the sitting disciples that true followers of Jesus share in Him (vv.6-8). Peter did not understand what Jesus was doing. Try to imagine how offended Peter must have been that His Lord and Master would play the part of a servant to him. *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" (v.6)*. Of course he was embarrassed because he should have washed Jesus' feet, as well as the feet of the disciples.

Peter objected because he did not understand that Jesus' actions had a deeper meaning. His response was really not much different than his response when they were at Caesarea Philippi when he told Jesus that He would not need to go to the cross (Matt. 16:22).

Now we discover that Jesus patiently explained His actions. *Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand" (v.7)*. Did Peter love Jesus? Yes, of course He did. Did Peter trust Jesus? Yes. Did Peter understand what Jesus was doing? Not at all. He would not understand until after the crucifixion and resurrection. After Christ returned to heaven and Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he finally grasped the miracle and purpose of the incarnation of God the Son.

There are two lessons for us here. First, let us be slow to speak when we do not understand the fullness of God's will or actions. Second, let us be quick to learn from God's teaching when something new or unexpected comes into our lives and ministries. It is true that we know much about the Bible, and that we love God sincerely. But we do not have perfect knowledge yet. "Afterward" we will all understand. For now we do well to be concerned for the major things and gracious about the minor things.

Jesus explained the importance of fellowship in Him. *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" (v.8)*. Because Peter was not able to comprehend beyond the current social level of what was acceptable, he soundly rebuked God the Son. In response to Peter's boldness, Jesus' answer exposed the "non-negotiable."

D.A. Carson explained the non-negotiable like this. “If there were nothing more at stake than the naked act of foot-washing, Jesus’ response would seem petty, unbearably rigid. It would sound like fake humility: ‘I command you to let me be humble and let me wash your feet—or you’re fired!’ But once the symbolism is seen, Jesus’ words are almost inevitable: *Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.*” (D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, pp.463-64.) Unless the work of the Lamb of God in our behalf has washed away our sins, we have no part with Him. Being identified with Jesus has nothing to do with our works, our accomplishments, our servanthood. Regeneration is provided by the Lamb of God, the Servant of Jehovah.

We need to understand that we are fully cleansed in Christ. We also need to understand that unclean followers are not even in Jesus (vv.9-11). Jesus explained the principle of spiritual cleanliness to Peter who desired extreme cleansing. *Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!”* (v.9). Peter strongly desired to have a part in the inheritance of Jesus. Maybe he did not fully grasp the spiritual nature of what Jesus was saying. But Peter obviously wanted to be counted one with Jesus and so he asked for the extreme treatment.

Jesus taught the importance of regular spiritual washing as well as that initial cleansing from sin. *Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean”* (v.10a). What does that mean? We are *bathed* by the washing of regeneration through the Holy Spirit. At salvation when we confess our sins and God gives us a clean heart, we are bathed once for all. But because we live in the flesh, we need regular *washing* as we confess our daily sins and God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

That is a good lesson for us to remember. At the same time, we also need to remember that not everyone who claims to have been bathed is clean. For the most part the disciples were clean, as is obvious from Jesus’ statement, *and you are clean* (v.10b). This can mean that Jesus declared that the disciples were truly born again at this point, having already experienced the miracle of regeneration. Or it might mean that in the divine plan the disciples would be born again and filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There was a room filled with Jesus and eleven disciples who, for the most part, appeared to be the same. However, appearances can be deceiving. That is obvious in the fact that Jesus went on to say, *but not every one of you*” (v.10c). This is a direct reference to Judas. He was neither washed or bathed. He was polluted with his sins. The good news is that Jesus, the eternal Judge, is never deceived. *For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean”* (v.11). Jesus Himself had called Judas to follow Him, knowing that he would yield to Satan’s temptation. He knew that Judas was never on board. But He humbly washed Judas’ feet. Here in is love.

God loves the world, and yet it is the world that crucified God’s beloved Son and still hates Him today. Many people pretend to be followers of Christ, but they deny Him on a whim at the drop of the hat. Are you bathed? Are you clean?