

John 13:1-38

Graham Nelson – LMC – 08/06/2025

- This morning, we are continuing on through the Gospel of John from where Andy left us last week. As always, my notes will be up on the LMC website for those who want to go over them again.
- Chapter 13 is again full of rich pickings, covering 4 main headings.
 - Jesus washing the Disciples feet – 13:1-20
 - Jesus predicting His betrayal – 13:21-30
 - The new commandment – 13:1-35
 - Peter's denial predicted – 13:36-38
- Because of time pressures I am only going to unpack John's account of the washing of the disciples' feet and the new commandment, I will leave it to you to study the other two areas in your own time.

Pray

John 13:1-38

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. 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. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 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." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet,^[a] but is completely clean. And you^[b] 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." 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^[c] 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. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled,^[d] 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." ²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,^[e] ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus^[f] of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. ³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."

- Before we start let's bring some context to the timeline of this chapter, it is now Thursday evening, the disciples, along with Jesus, have gathered for the evening meal or as we know it "the last supper".
- This is the meal where Jesus after supper, broke bread and gave the cup to His disciples. Both symbols of His impending sacrifice on the cross.
- I find it interesting that John didn't record the details of the "Last Supper" however he gives more detail than any of the other gospels on what else happened that night.
- Most biblical scholars agree that all the conversations recorded in chapters 13 through 17 occurred in the Upper Room which is quite significant when you consider that the next day Jesus was to be crucified.
- Let's now move on and unpack Jesus washing the disciples' feet.
- Let's start at verse 1 with John giving an introduction to chapters 13 through 17.
- He says:

Verse 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 thing that stood out is the statement "Jesus loved them to the end".
- This doesn't mean that Jesus loved them till He died, the word "end" in the Greek means "to the limit."
- In other words, Jesus gave them the uttermost proof of His love – to the limit – past, present and pointing to dying on the cross for them and us.
- This introductory verse is speaking of the future of what Jesus is going to go through in the next 24 hours.
- As I said Chapters 13 – 17 detail events that happened on this Thursday night and so it shouldn't surprise us of what John records in John 15:13.

John 15:13 *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends,"*

- So, let's now move onto the Foot Washing – so many truths, such good stuff.

Verse 3-5 *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, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 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.*

- John says that Jesus “*knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands*” which could also be translated “*Jesus knowing that all authority had been given to Him*”, knelt down and washed the disciples' feet.
- This is such a telling truth showing us Jesus' true nature and spirit.
- Have you ever noticed how some people with authority tend to act?
- They bark orders, expect people to bow and scrape to them, they make sure that people know that they are in charge, they have plush offices, big titles on the door plate, best cars, prime parking spots with their name on it of course, etc.
- Not Jesus, knowing he had all authority, instead of barking orders and acting all high and mighty, He got up from supper and started washing the disciples' feet.
- Why did Jesus do this?
- Jesus was on a mission – His time was short, His crucifixion was happening the next day, He only had this remaining time in the upper room to prepare the disciple for what lay ahead
- Jesus also knew that the disciples had been bickering amongst themselves as to who was the most important or the greatest.
- Even though foot washing wasn't uncommon in the culture of the day, the disciples weren't prepared for what Jesus was about to do.
- Why? Because foot washing was the task of the household servant, or whoever happened to be in the lowest position on the totem pole – it was their job when the guests arrived to get down on their knees, take a bowl of water and wash the guests' feet.

- This is why the disciples were uncomfortable; Jesus their Master was kneeling down before them to wash their feet – notice that bowing the knee was not a “black lives matter” invention; Jesus did it back in the first century.
- There are **four** lessons that Jesus is wanting the disciples to understand through this whole foot washing experience.
 - **One**, He wanted to give them a lesson in humility and grace.
 - **Two**, He wanted to explain cleansing.
 - **Three**, He wanted to give an example to them of servanthood.
 - And **fourthly**, He wanted to give them something they could take with them in the days ahead.
- Let's start with the **first** one, a lesson in humility and grace.
- How many have had their feet washed by someone else?
- I don't think washing someone else's feet is all that bad, however, for me, having my feet washed by someone else is embarrassing and uncomfortable.
- And that is what we see with Peter – always Peter - in verse 6 when Jesus slid over to wash his feet.

Verse 6 *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"*

- You bet, that's exactly what I am going to do

Verse 7 *Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."*

- Surprise, surprise, Peter is still not happy and says to Jesus in verse 8

Verse 8 *Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet."*

- Proving that he doesn't understand what and why Jesus is doing this act.
- Peter's pride was not ready to have Jesus serve him by washing his feet.
- The opposite to pride is humility and that is the first thing Jesus was teaching them with this act of servant heartedness.
- To let someone serve you takes humility, Peter was having trouble accepting Jesus washing his feet because of his underlying pride.

- Peter was also having a difficult time accepting this, because he hadn't really laid hold of what grace was all about, he hadn't dealt with his personal pride "You shall never wash my feet."
- It takes humility to let somebody serve you, especially when you know you don't deserve it, and Peter knew he didn't deserve it.
- This is where Grace comes into it.
- Grace is getting what we don't deserve. God's unmerited favour.
- Jesus' love, Jesus' forgiveness, Jesus' goodness, that's grace.
- Jesus was showing the disciples that it takes the laying down of self-importance and pride to accept God's grace.
- There are so many Christians that are being robbed because they allow the feeling of being not worthy to stop them from receiving what Jesus has done for them.
- The **second** thing that Jesus wanted to teach His disciples was the principal of cleansing which is highlighted in the second part of verse 8

Verse 8b *Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.*

- Peter being the smarty he was, replies

Verse 9 *"Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"*

- Now listen carefully to what Jesus says in verse 10.

Verse 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,*

- What is Jesus getting at here?
- As is often the case with Jesus, he uses the physical to explain the Spiritual.
- The physical is easy.

- You have a bath in the morning and then walk on dirty dusty roads in your open sandals, when you finally get to your destination you are not going to trapse the dirt that's on your feet into the house, so the servant meets you at the door and washes your feet.
- Now for the spiritual meaning that Jesus is trying to get across to Peter and the other disciples and obviously us today.
- For those who have accepted Jesus as your Savior, that is, by faith, believed what Jesus did for you on the cross, repented etc., that's your bath.
- Jesus is saying you're clean and you don't need a bath again.
- You don't need to get saved again, you have had your bath, you are "completely clean".

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

- The second part of this though is our feet.
- As the Jews back in Jesus' time had to walk on dirt roads, we are walking in a filthy world. Because of this, our spiritual feet get dirty, hence the need for spiritual foot washing or cleansing.
- You don't have to get saved again. You just need to wash your feet.
- Two scriptures show us this, one in the Lord's prayer and the other in 1 John 1:9

Matthew 6:12 *and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*

- Just as much as our wives or mothers don't want us to walk dirt into their house, God doesn't want the dirt (sin) of the world being trapsed into His house, hence the need for the ongoing cleansing of forgiveness from the sins we have picked up since our bath.
- What a beautiful picture Jesus is teaching the disciples and us today.
- "Lord, forgive me. wash me, cleanse me. Thank you, Lord."

- Something that we are reminded of every week when we take communion – judge yourself that you might not be judged.
- We're not getting saved again.
- We're just making sure nothing is standing between us and Him.
- The **third** lesson that Jesus was sharing with the disciple was the lesson of servanthood.

Verse 12-14 *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? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*

- Pastor Andy, Jesus is telling us to have "foot washing services".
- Unfortunately, that's what some churches have done but it's not what Jesus is getting at.
- What Jesus is saying is; I want you to apply what I've shown you.
- The attitude, the willingness to serve no matter what your title or position.
- Whatever that may be or look like, be willing to give up whatever place you think you may deserve, to serve others in everyday life.
- HKO and Dr Littlejohn.
- Look at what Luke records Jesus saying during the Last Supper.

Luke 22:24-27 *A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 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."*

- I love that statement. *"But I am among you as the one who serves."*
- Our calling is to be ones who are willing to serve one another in humility.

- Lastly, the **fourth** thing, a lesson for the days ahead.

Verse 15-17 *For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 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. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

- Jesus was about to send these men out as sheep among wolves.
- He was just 24 hours from His sacrifice on the cross.
- He wants to make sure that His example went with them wherever they end up and for whatever they must do as His disciples.
- Hey guys, it's not going to be easy but whatever you face I want you to go in all humility, with a willingness to serve, and I promise you will be blessed for following my example.
- We live in a tough world, with the knowledge that persecution will increase as the second coming draws closer, Jesus is saying minister my love in humility and servant heartedness – in short, be prepared to turn the other cheek.
- I apologize for the briefness of this study as there is so many other hidden truths we could have mined, but I need to get to the “New Commandment”
- Okay, lets skip down to verse 34-35 where John quotes Jesus giving the disciples the “new commandment”

Verse 34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

- “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another;”
- Have you ever thought – what’s new about this?
- Loving one another is a tenant right through the New Testament so what is new?

- The answer is there, you just have to keep reading to find out what the newness is.
- The newness of this command is in the *“just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”*
- Jesus is saying, I have given you an example. Now go and do likewise.
- We have just seen in the “washing of the feet” Jesus’ exemplifying what He wanted the disciples to do after He has gone, and this is the same.
- Remember Jesus has only a few hours left to prepare the disciples for the commission he was going to give them after His resurrection, a commission to go into the world to make disciples.
- This was the last time He was going to have time to tell them how and this new commandment is one of the ways.
- Even though the greatest expression of His love was yet to come by way of the cross, His example of love to them in the last 3 ½ years was obvious.
- Jesus is saying to the disciples and to you and me, take this example that I've shown you, this ultimate expression of love, and love one another.
- How or what does this love look like?
- The first thing that came to my mind was “forgiveness”.
- Without being conspiracy theorists, did Jesus know something about the disciples that we don't?
- They were friends, they had been together for 3 ½ years – they knew each other, warts and all, yet Jesus’ challenge is for them to love each other.
- Have you ever noticed it's often easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive someone that you really love?
- Why? Because we have a greater expectation that people who love you or are close to you are going to treat you better and are going to care more.
- We don't have that same expectation from those whom we don't know, which is why we can easily say:
- Lord, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.

- But when somebody who loves you and turns around and hurts you, or offends you, or even betrays you, forgiveness becomes a real challenge.
- Paul says in Ephesians 4:32

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you...*

- Paul is once again reiterating Jesus' example to us – in short.
- You want me to love people the way you loved me?
- You want me to forgive people the way you forgave me?
- I've counselled so many over the years who know this principle yet say they can't forgive – the hurt or betrayal is too great.
- The truth is, with God everything is possible
- Jesus can enable us to love and forgive if we're willing to let him work in and through us.
- The issue isn't whether you can do it or not, the issue is whether you're willing to let Jesus work in you to do that work of forgiveness and love.
- There's also lot of Christians who don't forgive because they confuse forgiveness with reconciliation.
- You can forgive somebody without necessarily being reconciled to them.
- I say, forgiveness is easy – trust is another matter.
- There have been numerous occasions in my Christian leadership where I have had to come to a point of saying, I forgive you, but I can't have you in my life anymore.
- To forgive someone means to release them from the debt that they owe against you.
- I release you in the name of Jesus.
- You owe me nothing. I forgive you, but I'm not putting myself in the position to be hurt again.
- Forgiveness is not an option – reconciliation is.

- Let's finish with:

By *this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*

- Jesus said that love would be the identifying mark of His disciples.
- Jesus would mark us as His disciples by our love for one another.
- We can mark ourselves as His disciples by our love for one another.
- The world can mark us as His disciples by our love for one another.
- In Bruce's commentary it says "Tertullian reports that the pagans of his day (a century after this Gospel was published) say of Christians, 'See how they love one another!'".
- What would people say of us – how do they view the way we love one another?
- In closing let's quickly **reflect** on Jesus' last hours and what he said by example to His disciples in Chapter 13.
 - **First**, a lesson in humility and an understanding that grace is something we don't deserve but we must accept.
 - **Second**, we don't need a bath again, but our feet need constant washing – we don't need to get saved again but we do have to constantly wash the filth of the world off our lives.
 - **Third**, to be the greatest we must be willing to be a servant.
 - **Fourth**, the days ahead are not going to be easy but whatever you face do it in all humility, with a willingness to serve, and Jesus' promise is that we will be blessed for following His example.
 - **Fifth** – Love one another as I have loved you with the fruit that the world will know that you are my disciples.

---oo0oo---