

# Lord, Wash My Feet

by Ed Miller

---

*The sermon emphasizes the act of foot washing as a profound expression of humility and refreshment in the context of Christian fellowship, revealing the heart of God through service to others.*

**Duration:** 57:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 13:7-17

**Topics:** "Divine Love", "Christ's Authority"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on four unveilings of the heart of God that Jesus revealed to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. The first unveiling is Jesus' deep love for his disciples, even knowing that his hour had come to depart from the world. The second unveiling is the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, which was already foreknown by Jesus. The third unveiling is Jesus' authority and power, as he knew that the Father had given all things into his hand. The fourth unveiling is Jesus' mission to reveal the heart of the Father, which he had been doing throughout his ministry. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and experiencing these unveilings in order to have a complete picture of the heart of God.

---

## Transcript

Our Father, we do thank you again that you have not left us on our own in the study of this book, but you have given us the Holy Spirit, put him in our hearts to continually give us a revelation of the Revelation, to continually shine upon our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we do fear our own wisdom, and we would ask you to deliver us completely from all that is flesh and blood and human. We know that thou art for our weakness everlastingly a gentleman, and you never force yourself upon us.

You never impose, but you always present a revelation of our Lord Jesus. We pray in a special way tonight that we might see him again. Lord, if the truths we touch are not new, if they are old, then quicken us again to those old truths.

Thrill us with the sight of Christ. Thank you. In Jesus matchless name we pray.

Amen. As I was thinking about sharing with you brothers this weekend, before we get into what I'd like to share, let me give you a Bible verse that ties in especially with the gathering of the brothers. It's Philemon 1.20. There's only one chapter.

Philemon 20. And I'm just going to make one little change in it, not to add to the Word of God, but I'm going to make the word brother, brothers. I'm just going to make it plural.

That's okay, I hope, for our purposes. Here it is. Yes, brothers, let me benefit from you in the Lord.

Refresh my heart in Christ. Another tremendous passage. Refresh my heart in Christ.

And that's our prayer this weekend, that we'd all receive refreshment. Refreshment from God, refreshment from each other. All the brothers refreshing one another in the Lord Jesus.

And in a special way that verse, that prayer, ties in with the first look that we have in the Scriptures, because we want to talk a little bit about refreshment. And refreshment from God and refreshment to each other and so on. There's a section of Scripture that has been big on my heart in the last few months.

Five chapters, probably five of the most beloved chapters in the Word of God. I'm talking about John chapter 13 through John chapter 17. Everybody loves to share from John 13 to John 17.

Bible teachers and earnest Bible students of every age have identified those five chapters, perhaps, as five of the most precious chapters in the Word of God. As far as the record goes, as you know, all of the events and the conversation in these marvelous chapters were one day before our Lord Jesus went to the cross. We won't get into the gymnastics what day that was, because different people come from different positions.

But one day, our Lord had completed His ministry, His formal ministry to the world, and now according to 13.1, He had turned to His own. In fact, that last week was given over to His own and His ministry to His own. Now, when we come to chapters like this, you know, for years I was sort of afraid of these chapters, because everybody told me how wonderful they were, and how much was in them, and how deep they were, and how full they were.

And I felt like I wasn't adequate for these chapters, and so I always hold back a little bit, because everybody had said such great things about these chapters, and I felt like, what could I say? Well, I do expect this weekend to miss something, miss a lot, and I don't expect to give what you haven't heard before, to be honest with you. But I think it would be wrong of me to say I've received nothing from these chapters, just because I haven't received everything from these chapters. There have been some principles that God has burned into my heart, burned into my life, and I'd like to share a little of that with you.

I do believe that it would help us, just to get a feel for these five chapters, if we did put ourselves back into that history that night, try to sense the emotion and what was going on. At this point, the disciples had very little spiritual capacity. I mean, all things being equal, even if they had been doing very well, they were only three and a half years with the Lord Jesus.

Even if they were wide open and didn't miss a trick, they were only three and a half years old in the Lord. And in one sense, the Lord Jesus is unloading this night before he dies. He's got a lot on his heart, and he says it all.

And that's why this has been such a tremendous section of Scripture. There's so much here. Now, let me give you an illustration of it.

I have a friend, a dear friend, up in Rhode Island. And some time ago, he came over to the house, and he was facing what so many these days have faced. He was about to get divorced, and it was a terrible time, a terrible time for him, for his family.

And he had a nine-month-old daughter. And I don't think he wanted to talk about it. I think he just wanted me there.

He didn't want me to say anything. He came into my living room, and he just sat down, and he had his little daughter on his knee. And as I sat, I just watched.

And I'll tell you, I learned a lesson that day. That man began to pour out his heart to that nine-month-old baby. He knew there was going to be a change in relationship, that he wasn't going to be able to see that baby and spend time with that baby.

You don't need the details of the divorce. That's always heart-rending. And he began to pour into that baby the most amazing thing.

He told the baby how much he loved him. And he told about his dreams for that child and about his plans. He gave her some tremendous promises.

And he promised how he was going to support her and how he was going to come and visit her and how he was making up a little savings. You couldn't believe what he was telling this little child. And this child played with his word of what he was saying.

He was pouring out his heart and telling this little child with no capacity, and this little child looking up into his face, not beginning to understand what this father was trying to do, what he was trying to communicate. Well, I have an idea. John 13-17.

It's something like that. He had 12 little babies being bounced on the knee of the Lord Jesus, and they're playing with his beards and his buttons. He's pouring out his heart.

And he's telling them so much. And they had that spiritual capacity. Follow these verses, please.

Chapter 13-7, Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter. Same chapter, please, verse 19. From now on, I'm telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he.

22. The disciples began looking at one another at a loss to know of which one he was speaking. Verse 28.

Now, no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose he had said this to them. Verse 36. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered.

Well, we don't need that. Where are you going? Verse 37. Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you right now? Chapter 14-5.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you're going. How do we know the way? Verse 8. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father. And it is enough for us.

Verse 22. Judas, now I scare you, said to him, Lord, what then has happened that you're going to disclose yourself to us, not to the world? Verse 29. And now I've told you before it comes to pass, that when it

comes to pass, you may believe.

And then chapter 16, verse 4. These things I've spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. Verse 12.

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 17 and 18. Some of his disciples therefore said to one another, what is this thing he's telling us? A little while and you will not behold me.

Again, a little while and you will see me. And because I go to the Father. Verse 18.

And so they were saying, what is this that he says a little while? We do not know what he's talking about. And that's pretty much the five chapters. We do not know what he's talking about.

Now, I know all of us think that our own life is unique. And like you, I have a very unique wife. In fact, on the wall in our room, we have song 69.

My dove, my perfect one is unique. And that's because she does some unique thing. One of the unique things my wife does is when we leave the children, let's say we're going to go away for a weekend.

It's amazing what those kids have to go through. They get a sermon from my wife. A sermon about meals.

A sermon about pets. A sermon about friends. A sermon about telephones.

A sermon about cleanliness. And then after she's all done giving these sermons, and maybe she's not that unique. After she's all done giving sermons, she begins to write notes.

And she leaves notes everywhere. There are notes on the refrigerator. And notes on the cupboard.

And notes in the bathroom. And notes on the light switches. And notes on the bed.

And notes on the closet. And then as we leave, there are three more short runs she makes from the car. Wait a minute.

I got to tell them one more thing. And she'll run in. And then we'll get going.

Sometime we go around the block. And come back. And she runs in.

And she has to tell them. Now, why does she do that? She does that because she loves them. And she's trying to anticipate every possible emergency that they might face.

And have it all solved. She anticipates everything. I think that's what you have in 13 to 17.

The Lord Jesus is leaving. And His little children were going to be... It's only for a weekend. You know, He's only going three days, really.

He's going for a weekend. And He's leaving these notes all over the place because He knows their heart. And He knows what they're going to be feeling.

And what they're going to be going through. And He's leaving all of these beautiful principles, notes, everywhere. Because they're little children.

And they can't cope when He's gone. One more thing about the five chapters as a whole. And then we'll look at what's on my heart.

I want to make one clarification in these marvelous chapters. I don't want you to get the wrong idea about these five chapters. The Lord Jesus didn't come to this night like I've come to this conference with a podium and a pile of notes.

And I've already prepared this. Most of this is table conversation. Most of this is initiated by one question and some other brother talks.

And they begin to talk in conversation. Jesus didn't come to this last night and say, now this is my last night on earth. What shall I tell them? I think I'll tell them one, two, three, A, B, C. He didn't give a lecture that night.

This was table conversation. It's amazing as you read this, you realize that it was His last night before He died, how in control He was, how relaxed He was. I remember when I was at Bible school, it happened almost every semester.

You know, at the beginning of the semester, the instructor would be all excited and he'd open up the Word and he'd begin to share and you could see so much of his heart and life. And he'd just share and share and questions would come up and it would carry on. But as you got nearer the end of the semester, you could tell that he was running out of time.

And he still had a lot of curriculum he hadn't covered. He had a lot of material that he hadn't gone over. And I always hated the last week of the semester because we cover a million things and he'd just begin to dump it on us and we'd have to take notes and all the rest.

Brothers, don't get the idea that that's what Jesus did that night. Jesus didn't say, now I've got so much curriculum and as many things I haven't done. And now I've got to dump it all out before I leave.

It's not that at all. Our Lord Jesus is not rambling through curriculum that He hadn't covered during His ministry. That's not what He's doing.

Yes, He's dumping. Yes, He's pouring out His heart. Yes, He has a burden.

But it's not because of things that He didn't cover. In fact, I think you'll agree, I hope to show you, that what the Lord Jesus is doing in these five chapters, if anything, is review. He's already covered all the material.

And now He's giving us a tremendous review. He had come to reveal God. He had come to reveal the Father.

He had come to reveal the Father's heart. And now He's going to leave the next day and accomplish the work. And what He's saying to His disciples is this, for three and a half years I've been revealing the Father.

I hope you've seen this. He's reviewing. And I hope you've seen this.

You want to see God's heart? I hope you haven't missed this. And He begins to lay down the tremendous unveiling of the heart of God that He had revealed all His life and all His ministry. And I think that's one of the things He's doing in these five chapters.

By illustration, by conversation, He's giving us a complete picture of the heart of God. I think if you could lay hold of all the principles in 13 to 17, I think you'd have it all. I think it's everything.

That's God's heart. That's what He wants you to know of the Lord. Well, God's people have studied this with far more spiritual and material qualification than I have.

But as I've gone through this, I've found eight things that the Holy Spirit seems in a special way to underscore. I'm sure it's probably not eight. There's probably more than that or less than that if they can be grouped together.

Depends on how you look at it. And I was going to give you all eight, but you can relax. I'm not going to give you all eight.

I really feel before the Lord that instead of rushing through eight principles, that we'd be better off taking one with each session. And so there are four. I don't know if they're more foundational than the others.

They've gripped my heart more. That's where I am. And I'd like to, with you, as God graces us, I'd like to show you four unveilings of the heart of God that our Lord Jesus, the night before He died, He said, if you've seen anything in my life, in my ministry, I hope you've seen this.

And that's what we'd like to look at. And oh, may God give us eyes to see these things. The first unveiling is right at the beginning, chapter 13.

Follow along, please, as I read. Now, before the Feast of Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come, that He should depart out of the world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil, having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, and taking a towel He girded Himself about.

Then He poured water into the basin, and He began to wash the disciples' feet, to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. And so He came to Simon Peter, and He said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter. Peter said to Him, Never shall you wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean, and you are clean, but not all of you, for He knew the one who was betraying Him.

For this reason, He said, not all of you are clean. And so when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

I have given you an example that you should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, neither is the one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

For those that enjoy logical connection, here's what I'd like us to look at, and then I hope we see that first unveiling of the heart of God. First, I'd like to try to nail down as much as we can what is the principle, what is the truth, the reality illustrated by foot washing, what's the principle? And then I'd like to spend a moment or two discussing why Peter, our representative, had such a hard time with that principle. And then, God gracing us, I'd like to expand the principle a little bit.

What does it mean to wash one another's feet? That's simple, that's what we'd like to look at. What is the principle? Why did Peter recoil at the principle? And then to expand the principle, what does it mean that we wash one another's feet? All right, what's the principle of foot washing? And right away, I'll jump into the principle. Some folks you know believe that it's literal, and that he decided that they actually have a ceremony, an ordinance where they wash feet.

Whether or not that's to be literal, at least underneath it, there's a principle as well. And so we'll just try to stick with the principle. Some folks, because of Luke 22, because just before this, according to the record, the disciples were arguing who's going to be greatest in the kingdom, because of that context, they say the principle is humility.

Here they are, fighting about who's going to be greatest, and then the Lord Jesus humbles Himself and gets down and washes their feet. Well, I don't doubt that there is a principle of humility in this passage, but I don't think that's the main idea. I don't think that's the chief thing.

I think it was deeper than that. I think it was fuller than that. I think Jesus was going to unveil the heart of God.

And I think He said, in effect, you know, I've wanted you to know God. I hope you understand this tremendous truth about the heart of God. We can sort of home in on the principle a little bit just by looking at how the foot washing is used in the Scriptures.

It's first mentioned in Genesis 18. Remember Abraham, when the three men, not men, his visitors came to visit him. And the Bible says that he washed their feet.

And then in Luke chapter 7, when the Lord Jesus came to the house of Simon the leper, and He said, Simon, you haven't washed my feet. This woman has honored me. She's washed my feet with her tears, but you offered me no water.

And 1 Timothy 5, where God is describing the widow in deed. She's washed the saints' feet. You know, in those days, they didn't have what we have today, paved roads and all.

They had open-toed sandals, and they didn't wear stockings, and the roads were dirty and dusty. And foot washing, in those days, everybody did it. At every house, there was foot washing vessels.

In fact, some, with reason, believe that the water Jesus changed into wine was foot washing water from those vessels. Of course, that would add a little to the miracle, I think, if that's what He did. But everybody had the vessels.

And it was an act of hospitality. When you came to somebody's home and they washed your feet, that wasn't humility, saying, I think I'll be humble and wash your feet. It wasn't humility.

It was an act of hospitality. It was an act of refreshment. And I told you we'd be there.

That's the point. That they were being refreshed. It's sort of like when you come to our homes today, we say, take off your shoes, relax, make yourself at home.

And foot washing, I think if you're going to understand the principle, you need to understand this refreshment that led to fellowship. And the Lord Jesus refreshed them, and it led to this tremendous fellowship. Christ was not saying Christians ought to be humble and serve one another.

Not here. He said that many times. Not here.

He wasn't saying that. It was deeper than that. He was trying to teach, to unfold this truth that I am the first refresher.

I am the foot washer. I am the servant. I will wear the slave apron.

I think as we go through the principle, not only this one, but the ones that we'll look at, everything he shares now about the heart of God just goes contrary to thinking. It's all radical. It's all backwards.

It's all upside down. That's almost how you know it's true. Because the Lord did so often seem to take his truth, and it just ran contrary to the natural heart of man.

I think we'll best see where Jesus was coming from if we understand where Peter, our representative, was coming from. Where was Peter coming from spiritually? I remember he was representing all the others. I think where he was is where they were.

What Jesus said and did to Peter, Jesus says and does to us. He represented us. He's God's object lesson of progressive sanctification.

That's why it's so easy to identify with Peter because I think we all progressively advance as he did. Peter had gained a reputation through the years. It's not always accurate, but he was impulsive and excitable and zealous and so on, very ardent and more zeal than knowledge and so on.

Don't think of Peter as a blundering idiot. He wasn't that. In fact, he had come quite a ways in his knowledge of God.

He had come quite a ways in his knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I think he's a pretty fair representative of how far they had all come. And what he says, he acts now as a representative. Let me show you from other passages.

I've jotted them down to save a little time. Here's how far he'd come. John 13, 37, I will lay down my life for you.

Luke 22, 33, Lord, with you, I'm ready to go to prison and to death. Matthew 26, 33, even though all may fall away because of you, I will never fall away. Matthew 26, 35, even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you.

Now, brothers, don't read that la, la, la. That is a tremendous thing. It was deep love and deep affection.

This was heart. He had come this far in his life. This was his present life.

He stood before Jesus. Christ was Lord of all. He was a servant.

And he just said, Lord, I've seen that much anyway, and I am your subject. I will die for you. And he meant that.

That was his real heart. Christ is absolute Lord. He is a totally dependent slave.

You see, you're not going to understand Peter's resistance unless you understand Peter's revelation of Christ. And Peter's revelation of Christ was this. You are the Lord.

You are the master. You are the destiny. You can ask anything you want.

I'll do it. Send me anywhere, I'll go. Require anything, I'll give it.

I believe you're Lord and I'm slave. I've given everything. Peter had surrendered his family, his friends, his occupation, his fish, his boat, his net, everything.

Christ was Lord of all. If you were standing on the Sea of Galilee, you would have heard Peter singing George Stebbins' song every time he went fishing. Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way.

Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Constantly, hold o'er my being absolute sway. That's where he was.

And it was in that light and from that understanding, and if you want to call it theology, that's his theology. Christ is Lord. I'm servant.

And Peter was almost swept away this day. The day before Jesus died by this revelation of Christ to his heart. I'll tell you, you know, one of the brothers prayed earlier that we'd be changed and that our theology and so on.

I'll tell you, the Lord Jesus blew a hole in Peter's theology. He never recovered from this, as you'll see. Glance again, 13, 3 and 4, when Jesus girded himself with that slave apron.

I don't know the original languages. I praise God He's given us men to write in English what they say it says in Greek and Hebrew. And I've studied some of those men.

And they point out that there's a tremendous emphasis on the pronouns. We don't see it in English. And it comes out like this.

Chapter 13, 6 to 8. Thou my, see that's the Hebrew, I mean the Greek. Thou, are you kidding? You wash my feet? Peter, I mean, Lord, you don't know my theology. I'll wash your feet, no problem.

I'll serve you, no problem. But thou, my, verse 8. Again, the same Greek scholars tell us the Greek cannot get stronger than it was in this passage. When he said never shall you wash my feet, he uses that form, never unto the ages of eternity.

Talk about dogmatism. No, no, never, never. No matter what you say, Lord, never.

Very strong. If I live a million years, I'll never let this happen. You don't understand good theology, Lord.

You're the Lord. Let's see if we get it right now. You're the Lord.

I'm the servant. I'll wash your feet. Never, never unto the ages of eternity, I'll lay down my life for you.

I'll die for you. I'll not deny you. I'll wash your feet.

Lord, please don't turn that thing around. Now, it was at this point that the Lord Jesus said what I consider to be one of the most shocking things he ever addressed the Christians. Verse 8. If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.

No part. Now, he wasn't saying, Peter, if you don't let me do this, you'll die and go to hell. He wasn't saying that.

He had already said in 1310 that you're clean. Peter was already clean. He already was saved.

But he said, Peter, if you don't understand this principle, if you don't understand that I serve you, that I refresh you before you can refresh me, then you'll have no part, no intimate relationship, no fellowship, no union, no oneness, no revelation, no ministry. Well, that's pretty much enough to get that first principle before you. I think the Lord Jesus, the night before he died, was trying to review again, and he said in effect this.

Brothers, I hope you've seen this much, that it's God that wears the apron. That it's God who ministers to man. That it's God who serves, and before you lift a finger to serve him, he's already at your feet, washing your feet.

I remember when I first trusted in the Lord, I was taught for many years that I was saved to serve God. Not primarily so. Here's the principle.

Not saved to serve. Saved to be served in order to serve. Do you see the difference? I tell you, that's not just terms.

That's not just language. That's not just semantics. That's a different direction, brothers.

Saved to be served in order to serve. And there can be no other way. Peter stood that day where thousands have stood since, sold out unto the Lordship of Christ.

Dear Lord, I am served. I'm your servant. And they have no part with him.

My, that's a tragedy. No part with him. So heartbreaking, you know, that we see some every now and then, earnest and sincere, laboring and praying and giving and going on year after year, so busy, working, serving, washing God's feet.

And in reality, they don't know the Lord. They are not having a part, an intimate relationship with him. Saved to be served in order to serve.

Let me develop a little bit more why Peter had such a hard time with this. Yes, because his theology hadn't come that far. Peter had a bumpy road all the way along, as you know.

And as you know, he made it fine. And he made it fine because of his heart. He had a willing heart.

He had a willing heart. Now, at this point, Peter's pretty confused and puzzled. And when he heard those words, have no part with me, I tell you, for that sensitive heart, that was like getting hit in the head with a four by twice.

Poor Peter. I'm willing to die for you, Jesus said, we'll have no part. Come on, poor Peter.

Peter doesn't understand what he's saying, but there's no way he wants to risk that. His heart was saying, Lord, wait a minute. No fellowship? No part with you? Okay.

And wash my head and my arms and give me a bath. How quick he is to drop his dogmatism. One minute, he's inflexibly dogmatic.

Never. Not to the ages of eternity. Never.

Okay, wash my whole body. Now, Peter didn't run to that extreme, you know, in five months. Or five weeks.

Or even five days. This went five minutes. I used to have little hope for dogmatic people.

I come out of the denominational group. And I'll tell you, we are dogmatic, see? We know, and this is how it is, and it'll never change, and you can't tell me. And I used to give up on them.

I'd say, forget it. There's no hope for you until I read this. If you've got a heart like Peter, it doesn't matter how dogmatic you are.

I used to get so scared of these dogmatic people that never change. And thereby, if they drum, you'd find them upstream. They're just so determined, they know everything.

But this dogmatism can change in a moment. When, if their heart is saying, Lord, if it means no fellowship with you, then I'm willing to change. Peter missed it, really, on both extremes.

First, he rejected that which was indispensable. And then he required that which was superfluous. And he missed it on both sides.

See, Peter thought he was being humble by rejecting the Lord's offer to serve him. It's never humility when you reject the Lord's offer to serve you. That's pride.

That's always pride. I don't want to go too far astray on this, but Peter has to learn this. And right away, he jumps in.

He says, Lord, if it means relationship, if it means fellowship, you got it. I'll do it. I'll take it.

And first, that was only words. Later on, the Lord made it come down into his heart. When he said, not my feet only, but my head, the whole body.

There's no understanding in that statement. There's a lot of heart in that statement, but there's no understanding in that statement. And God must now take this truth.

He jumps at it with his mouth. All right, then we'll do it your way. You can serve me.

But he doesn't understand what he's saying. He doesn't begin to know. And so the Lord Jesus said, all right, Peter, I'll tell you what we'll do.

We'll go your way and see where we get. You want to serve me? I'm Lord, you're servant. Peter, there's certain things you don't understand.

Let me mention just four. I'll give you the reference. I won't spend time on it.

I'll just mention this. The first thing Peter didn't understand was that there was a personal devil who hated his guts and wanted to see him undone. Peter didn't understand that.

You know, it's almost comical to read the record. Matthew 16, 22, Peter takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him. He says, Lord, and he's yelling at him.

The scriptures say he's hollering at Jesus. I love in this connection, Luke 22, 31, 32, Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. See, Peter didn't understand in the spiritual conflict that there was a real devil.

Later on, he understood and he wrote about it. And he said, Satan's like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Where'd he learn that? I'll tell you where he learned it.

Jesus said, all right, Peter, you want to serve me? Here's your first assignment. Matthew 26, 36. You're ready to die for me, right? Watch for one hour.

The greatest night in the history of the world. Some of the greatest conflicts ever going on spiritually. Peter's unconscious to the whole thing.

Here's what he didn't know and Jesus explained it to him. Peter, you don't know that there's a real devil there. That's why you can't serve me.

Peter, Matthew 26, 41. The Spirit's willing. Finish it.

Peter, that's why you can't serve me. If you don't understand that principle. Peter said, all right, Lord, let me try again.

John 18, Matthew 26, record the story. All the soldiers come, 500 soldiers armed, ready to arrest the Lord. He said, all right, Lord, I'll show you.

I'll serve you. And he pulled out a sword. Now, Peter, the fishermen versus Rome.

I can serve you, Lord. I can defend you. I've got it in me.

And Jesus said, Peter. Then he cuts off the ear of the high priest. Scholars don't know how he did that.

You know, some people said he was trying to decapitate him. You know, he went that way. Some say he was trying to part him down the middle and went down.

We don't know the truth. Probably he's getting the sword out of his sheath. I went up.

Here's what Peter didn't understand. And the Lord Jesus explained it to him later after he healed his Christian service and put it back. He says, Peter, you are not equipped to be a servant.

I got angels. Now those are servants. And at any moment I could call 12 legions of angels.

If I wanted a servant, Peter. Psalm 50. If I were hungry, I would not tell you.

You're not equipped. You don't have the capacity to serve me. Peter, there's a real devil.

You can't serve me. Peter, the flesh is weak. You can't serve me.

Peter, you're not made to be a servant. You don't have the capacity. I've made servants.

They go back and forth like lightning. They do my bidding all the time. I know what a servant is.

I didn't make you to be a servant. You can't even run a mile, Peter. You can't serve me.

Well, he almost had it in his heart. But he said, Lord, I know I can do it. Let me serve you.

Well, you know the record. Very humbling truth that Peter had to learn. The Bible records Matthew 26, 58, that when they all scattered, Peter followed afar off.

And after a while, he's getting closer. And then you see him in the circle of the avowed enemies of Jesus Christ. Matthew 26, 69, a little servant girl comes up.

He denies it. I don't know. Then another servant girl comes and he denies it with an oath.

And then finally, bystanders come up, said your speech betrayed you. And he curses and he swears and he denies the Lord. Luke 22, 61, the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

He was in love with himself. He had vowed to give up his life for the sake of Christ. Instead, he saved his life and denied the Lord.

It's an amazing thing, brothers. It's more amazing as you go on and realize it. If you go the other way, if you say, He's Lord, I'm servant, I will serve Him.

Where will it lead? And every time, it's hard to believe, that approach will lead to a positive denial of Jesus Christ. A positive denial of Christ, many, many, many of Christians have ended up here, weeping, broken, saying, Okay, Lord, we'll do it your way. I can't serve you.

You serve me. You refresh me. And a servant is born.

And a servant is created. Saved to be served in order to serve. God is the one who washes the feet.

He wears the apron. And it's a marvelous thing when God begins to write in our heart that I am saved in order to let God refresh me, minister unto me. Having that part with Him, that intimacy, that relationship, that fellowship, that oneness, that union.

Now we can talk about service. Not until then. Oh, brothers, we need to see this great revelation of the heart of God.

Everybody says, Oh, surrender so hard. It is not hard. It's easy to surrender your family and your life and your vocation.

That's easy. But surrendering your surrender, that's something else again. And oh, may God bring us to the place where we just say, All right, Lord, I've surrendered everything to you.

Now I surrender my surrender. And you begin to wash me, minister unto me, in order that I might refresh others. Let me say a word before we close about this other side.

Saved to be served in order to serve. John 13, 13 to 15. You also wash one another's feet.

What does it mean? How do you wash my feet? How do I wash your feet? If Him washing my feet means God ministers unto me in order to prepare me to minister unto others, what does it mean that we wash one another's feet? Well, whatever it means, it has to tie in somehow with verse 8, wouldn't you say? Jesus said, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. Somehow when Christ refreshes us, we have a relationship. That refreshment, whatever He does in that refreshment, that binds us together.

That makes us one. We have a part when He washes us. And so wouldn't it be logical to say that whatever it means, we'll look at that in a moment, whatever it means to wash one another's feet, whatever it means to have you refresh me, me refresh you.

When that's done, it binds us together. We have a part. We have a union.

We have a oneness, an intimacy. You know, you hear so much these days about unity and oneness and body life and let's all be one and love one another. When am I one with Christ? And the answer is when He refreshes me.

When are Christians one with each other? When we learn what it means to refresh one another. When brothers and sisters in the Lord begin to refresh one another, God's way. I'll tell you then, there's a unity.

Christian A is united with Christian B and a team of mules couldn't pull them apart. That's unity. That's oneness and it comes from refreshment.

We don't programs on unity and we don't need seminars on unity and we don't need tapes on unity and we don't need books on unity. We need God's people learning how to refresh one another. How can I refresh you? How can you refresh me? Let me give three simple suggestions, practical, and then we'll close.

I'll just state it first and then illustrate it for you. Of course, the most basic. The first way Christians refresh one another is by letting the Lord refresh them.

Here's a marvelous illustration of it. First, second Corinthians 7, 13 to 16. And it uses the word refresh.

It says that Titus was refreshed by the Corinthians. In other words, Titus had his feet washed by the Corinthians. Titus was refreshed.

Now read the record, second Corinthians, and how did they refresh him? And verses 13 to 16, Titus went to Corinth, saw the Corinthians, looked into Christ, and he was refreshed. They did nothing. They just looked to Jesus.

They were being refreshed by the Lord and they automatically washed his feet. And so Paul contacted Titus at how it's going. He said, whoo, I am refreshed.

What did they do? They did nothing. They just enjoyed Jesus. And when he saw that, he was so refreshed.

This is the key to all ministry, really. Not that we run in a thousand directions trying to refresh one another, but that we walk in that unbroken relationship. Refreshment is spiritual.

You know, here's a brother with a problem and Christian A goes up. What you need is a verse. Maybe he does need a verse.

Another one comes up. We need to pray about that. And then he prays.

Is his feet washed? Maybe. Maybe not. What you need is to come out to fellow people.

Is that washing his feet? Maybe. It could be. Giving him advice.

Is that washing his feet? Giving him a dollar? It could be if you're doing that because you've been refreshed by the Lord. Here's another Christian. He doesn't even know his problem.

He's too in love with the Lord. He's walking around. Man, the Lord spoke to my heart today.

This guy's trying to get his problem out. This guy's enjoying the Lord. He goes up.

He might not say anything. He's just knowing Christ. Christ is manifesting in him.

He's thrilled in the Lord. And then he goes back home to his wife and his wife says, what changed you? Somebody gave me a verse. Someone prayed with me.

Someone dragged me to Belgium. No, you should have seen that Christian. Man, he's enjoying Christ.

It was adjoining to him. That's what washes feet. That's what washes feet.

Brothers, get into that union with Christ. Let him wash you. Let him refresh you.

Have a part with him. And you're going to wash everybody. Great day.

We'll have a shower of foot washing around here this weekend if we're all letting the Lord wash us. That's basically what foot washing is. It's just that byproduct, that overflow of being washed by Christ.

There's another illustration and it's very practical. The principle is walking in the Spirit or being available to the Lord or in the Lord. There's another illustration about refreshment.

It's in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 18. Paul said he was refreshed when Stephanas, Fortunus and Achaicus arrived because God used them to meet his personal needs in the Lord. It wasn't that they went around looking for some needs to meet.

That's why the expression in the Lord in that verse that we shared before we started here, Philemon 20. Let me benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

It isn't that we're out trying to find needs, but that we're available to the Lord and as we walk in that union and God brings that into our life as we provide needs, as we minister physically to people, that washes feet. That refreshes them as Paul was refreshed. One other and we're done.

It sort of ties in with chapter 13. You know, it's quite beautiful. The heart of Christ here.

He was so concerned with cleansing feet. He didn't come in and walk around and go, oh, dirty, dirty feet. Mine.

I've never seen feet like that. He wasn't interested in dirty feet. He was interested in clean feet.

If you had the heart of Christ, I know my son, Stephen. Is he here? Yeah, he came to dinner one time and honestly, I've never seen hands like that. They were dirty handed and I hadn't had this passage yet, Steve,

so I'm free and he came in.

I said, look at those hands. Did you ever see? Come in here. And I grabbed him by the wrist.

Look at those hands. And then the girls come in. Let me see.

Let me see. Let me see. I showed his hands to everybody.

That's not how the Lord Jesus did it. He wasn't trying to show all the dirt. Brothers, it's in our attitude toward God's people when they fall, when they slip.

Rather than exposing them and talking about them and showing all this dirt, love covers a multitude. Oh, how we could wash feet, how we could refresh if we wouldn't expose it. If our heart was set on cleansing, if our heart was set on purity, if our heart was not set on exposing and look, how can I wash your feet? I can wash your feet by delighting in the Lord.

I can wash your feet by being available to my God. And as God engineers the circumstances, and if I'm able to help, I can wash your feet by helping. And I can wash your feet by having a large veil over your mistakes, over your sin and you over mine.

Walk in love and cover a multitude of sins. One of the big portions of this chapter has to do with he that is bathed needs not to have another bath, but needs only to have his feet washed. And I know all of the things, you know, once you're saved, you don't have to get saved again.

And all you have to do is get your feet clean. And as you go through life, it confesses and all of that. Maybe that's all.

I don't know. I know this. Here's another principle from that.

Once you're bathed, all right, let's take that to be salvation, ethical cleansing. Once you know the Lord, what's your only need after that? And no other need. He that is bathed needs only one need.

What's your only need after you're saved? That's your only need. There's no other need. Oh, may God teach us.

Jesus, the day before he went to the cross, he said, I got some things to show you. I hope you haven't missed this. You want to know God's heart.

I come to reveal God. And here's the big thing about God. He wants to serve you.

He wants to wash your feet. He wants to minister to you. You're saved to be served in order to serve.

And that's your only need. There's no other need once you're saved. And he says, have you seen that? You haven't seen anything.

Look at this and this and this. And may God grace us to see it. Let's pray.

Our Father, we do thank you so much that you have not called us first to serve you, to minister unto you. Lord, we know our natural heart as Peter recoils at the thought that the Creator would be at the creature's feet, that you would minister to us. Enable us, Lord, to have that heart that would just allow you to refresh us in order that we might refresh others.

You work it in us, we pray, in Jesus' name.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11415.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ed-miller/lord-wash-my-feet/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**