

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

by J.C. Ryle

J.C. Ryle's sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and love as exemplified by Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

Scripture: John 13:6

Topics: "Love in Action", "Humility"

Description

J.C. Ryle emphasizes the profound humility and love demonstrated by Jesus when He washed the disciples' feet, illustrating that even the Son of God did not consider it beneath Him to perform the most menial tasks. Ryle highlights that this act serves as a powerful example for believers, urging them to practice humility and love towards one another. He warns against the dangers of pride, which is offensive to God, and encourages Christians to find joy in serving others, no matter how small the act may seem. The sermon calls for a return to these fundamental Christian virtues, which are accessible to all, regardless of status or knowledge. Ultimately, Ryle reminds us that embodying humility and love is essential for fulfilling our calling as followers of Christ.

Transcript

"Then he came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to him, Lord, are you washing my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this . . . So when he had washed their feet, taken his garments, and sat down again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." (John 13:6-15),

The verses we have now read conclude the story of our Lord's washing the feet of his disciples the night before he was crucified. The wonderful condescension of Christ in doing such a menial action can hardly fail to strike any reader. We should notice the plain practical lesson which lies upon its surface. The Lord says, "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

Humility is evidently one part of the lesson. If the only begotten Son of God, the King of kings, did not think it beneath him to do the humblest work of a servant, there is nothing which his disciples should think themselves too great or too good to do. No sin is so offensive to God and so injurious to the soul as pride. No grace is so commended as humility. It would be well for the Church if this very simple truth was more remembered and real humility was not so rare. Perhaps there is no sight so displeasing in God's eyes as a

self-conceited, self-satisfied, self-contented, stuck-up professor of religion.

Love is manifestly the other part of the great practical lesson. Our Lord would have us love others so much that we should delight to do anything that can promote their happiness. We ought to rejoice in doing kindnesses, even in little things. We ought to count it a pleasure to lessen sorrow and multiply joy, even when it costs us some self-sacrifice and self-denial. We ought to love every child of Adam so well, that if in the least trifle we can do anything to make him more happy and comfortable, we should be glad to do it. This was the mind of the Master, and this the ruling principle of his conduct upon earth.

The lesson before us may seem a very simple one; but its importance can never be overrated. Humility and love are precisely the graces which the men of the world can understand, if they do not comprehend doctrines. They are graces about which there is no mystery, and they are within reach of all classes. The poorest and most ignorant Christian can find occasion each day for practicing love and humility. If we would do good to the world, and if we would make our calling and election sure, let us never forget our Lord's example in this passage. Like him, let us be humble and loving toward all.

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