

Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet John 13:1-17

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet demonstrates His humility and love, and sets an example for Christian living.

Scripture: John 13:1

Topics: "Humility", "Servanthood"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the profound humility of Jesus as He washes the disciples' feet, demonstrating His love and servanthood even in the face of betrayal. The sermon explores the contrast between true humility, exemplified by Christ, and the spurious humility seen in Peter's initial protest against being washed. Torrey highlights that Jesus' actions symbolize His entire mission of cleansing and service, urging believers to follow His example in their own lives. The message concludes with the call to practice humility and service, reminding us that true blessedness comes from doing, not just knowing.

Transcript

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The True Humility of the Master, vv. 1-5 What was the place of this lesson? The time? What was Jesus about to do? From whom was He to depart? To whom was He to depart? Had the world appreciated Him? Had the disciples? What might very naturally be His feeling at the prospect of leaving these dull, unbelieving disciples to go to realms of glory? Was that His feeling? With what thoughts might He very naturally be occupied at that time? With what thought was He supremely occupied?

What expression in v. 1 explains all this? What sort of love was His? Why did He love His disciples? Why were they "His own"? (John 17:12; 2 Peter 2:1.) Are the angels in heaven "His own" in any such sense as we redeemed sinners are? What does the fact that we are "His own" make sure? (17:12.) What view of death does this verse set forth? Ought we then to dread death? (John 14:28, 29.) What is mentioned as a black background for the brightness of the Saviour's unfailing love?

Why is the perfidy of Judas mentioned at this point? Where did Judas get his awful purpose to betray the Son of God? Was that the first thing that Satan had ever put into his heart? If Satan had put this purpose into Judas' heart, was he responsible for it? (James 4:7.) Was it Judas' actions that Satan attacked first?

Did the devil ever work in any one besides Judas? (Acts 5:3; Eph. 2:2.) Of what three wondrous facts was Jesus clearly conscious at this moment? (Compare 3:35; Matt. 11:27.)

What are some of the "all things" that the Father "had given into His hands"? (c. 5:22; 17:2; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:21, 22; Heb. 1:2; 2:8, 9; 1 Cor. 15:27.) As a prelude to what is the divine glory that the Father had bestowed upon the Son mentioned? In full consciousness of what did Jesus humble Himself to wash the disciples' feet? When we have a little dignity and authority bestowed upon us are we ready still to descend to perform the humblest services for those put under us?

Why not? When the consciousness of superiority of rank or ability tempts us to shirk the lowliest offices for the humblest of God's children, what should we remember? Was this not a great lowering of Christ's glory? What seven things is Jesus here recorded to have done? Is there anything remarkable in any of those seven things taken in itself? Is there anything remarkable in those seven things as Jesus did them? Did Jesus ever do anything more amazing? How can the most commonplace actions be made amazingly glorious?

How would you have felt to have been there and had Jesus wash your feet? Does Jesus wash our feet? Is there any filth viler and more repulsive to Him than that of the soiled feet that Jesus humbles Himself to wash for us? How do these acts of Jesus symbolize His whole work? (Phil. 2:6.) 2. The Spurious Humility of the Disciple, vv. 6-11 Did all the disciples submit to the feet washing? What was it prompted Peter to protest? Was it a true humility? How does a true humility manifest itself?

Do we ever see a spurious humility today that refuses the abounding mercies of Christ on the plea that it is not worthy of them? Is that true humility? With what answer did Jesus meet Peter's first protest (v. 6)? Does God ever do things that we cannot understand? Upon what thought should we rest at such times? When would Peter understand the meaning of Christ's act? (vv. 14-17; John 14:26; 1 Peter 5:5.) Was Peter satisfied with Jesus' answer (v. 8)? Did he display much humility in this?

Was this the first time Peter had thought that he knew better than Jesus? (Matt. 16:22). Is there any reference in Peter's "never" to Jesus' "hereafter"? Do we ever meet nowadays this pride that thinks it knows better than Jesus what He ought to do for us and consequently refuses to accept what He offers? What was Jesus' answer to this emphatic refusal of Peter? Why would Peter have no part with Jesus if he refused the feet washing? What was the alternative to being washed by Christ?

What does that involve (9)? What did Peter answer? Did this answer spring from a due weighing of the profound words Jesus had spoken? Do we duly weigh the words of the Master in our responses to Him? How do we feel when our profoundest utterances are treated lightly? Was Jesus impatient or discouraged (v. 10)? What was Jesus' answer? What is the meaning of the answer? In what sense is the believer "bathed" already? (1 John 1:7; John 15:3; Titus 3:5.) In what sense does he need daily cleansing?

How does Jesus cleanse him from the daily defilement? (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26.) What did Jesus say the disciples were? Were they perfect? In what sense were they clean? (Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17, 21.) Were the entire twelve clean? Who was the unclean one? Was the one who was to deny Him three times and those who were to forsake Him clean? What, then, is every true believer in spite of faults and falls? How long had Jesus known who would betray Him? (2:25; 6:70, 71.) 3. The Law of Christian Living--Do as I Have Done, vv. 12-17 What question did Jesus put to them when He had completed the feet washing (v. 12)?

Do we always know what the Lord has done to us? What had He done (v. 15)? Wherein lay the necessity of that example? (Luke 22:24.) What is the rule of Christian living? (John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; Eph. 5:2.) What does this example of the feet washing mean for us? By what titles did the disciples call Christ (v. 13)? What does Lord mean? What does Master mean? Did these titles rightly belong to Christ? What argument does Jesus found upon these titles (v. 14)? Is that a good argument?

What is the one who calls Jesus Lord and Master and does not seek to stoop as low as He? Is there any reference in Peter's writings to this incident? (1 Peter 5:5.) What did Jesus say of the relation of servant and Lord? Does not every one know that? Why then introduce it with such solemn emphasis? How many Christians carry this thought out in their lives? How many Christians would be satisfied with an earthly lot like His? Ought we to be content with it? Why? Do we ever see professed servants of Christ assuming a greatness and a dignity He discarded?

Is it the knowledge of these truths that brings blessedness? Do we ever try to substitute knowledge of truth for practice of truth? Will knowledge of truth bring blessedness? What does knowledge of truth where there is no practice bring? (Luke 12:47, 48; Jas. 4:17.) What truths were they which Jesus had especially in mind when He said: "Blessed are ye if ye do them"? What then is the road to blessedness? Do many follow that road to blessedness? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus

His divinity, 3; humanity, 4, 5, 11; titles: Master (Teacher), 13, Lord, 13; wondrous patience with man's dullness and failure to ponder and appreciate His words, 9, 10; departure from the world shameful and painful as it was, was a departure to the Father, 1; loved His own to the end--thoughts of them occupied His mind in His closing hour rather than thoughts of His own glory that was drawing so near, 1; took upon Him the form of a servant and performed the most menial services, 4, 5; performed these lowly services in full consciousness of His own transcendent glory, 3-5; gave us an example of how to act toward others, 15; made the most commonplace acts glorious as an amazing revelation of humility and love, 4, 5; He knew: that His hour was come, 1; that He came from God, 3; that He went to God, 3; that the Father had given all things into His hands, 3; who should betray Him, 11; the condition of having a part with Him--being washed by Him, 8; things typified, 4, 5, 12: riseth from supper--risen from His rightful place in glory, compare v. 3; layeth aside His garments--laying aside garments of divine majesty, compare Phil. 2:6, 7; took a towel and girded Himself--took upon Him the form of a servant, Phil. 2:7; poureth water into a basin--provides the cleansing Word, compare John 15:3; washes the disciples' feet--applies the cleansing water, compare Eph. 5:26; takes His garments--reassumes His glory, compare John 17:5; sat down again--reassumes His place as Lord, compare Heb. 10:12.

2. Believers

Belong to Christ-- "His own," 1; loved by Christ, 1; the chief object of His thought and care even on the eve of His coming glory, 1; bathed, clean, need daily cleansing from daily defilement, 10; call Jesus Master and Lord, 13; should walk as He walked, 14; should do to one another as He has done to us, 15; should "wash one another's feet" with the Word; perform most menial services; are no greater than their Lord; should desire nothing higher than He had, assume no dignity He discarded and be above no services He performed; will find their blessedness not in knowing but in doing, 17, and in lowly service.

3. Peter

His imagined humility but real pride, 6, 8; failure to understand the meaning of Jesus' acts, 7; failure to ponder the meaning of Jesus' words, 9; talking when he ought to have been thinking, 8, 9; promise of future understanding, 7; prompt repentance, 9.

4. Judas Iscariot

Unclean, 10, 11; opened his heart to the devil's suggestions, 2; betrayed his Master and Lord, 2, 11; the object of Christ's lowly and loving offices, 5, 10.

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