

The Gospel of John: The Washing

John 13:1-17

Timing & Motivation (v. 1-2)

- Passover acts as the backdrop for the final days of Jesus' earthly ministry & sacrifice
- He sets about on the final steps of His mission, motivated by love for His people
- Jesus & the disciples are reclining for an evening meal
 - This is the Last Supper event, which was a Passover Seder meal
 - However, John indicates that they celebrated this meal the night before most Jews would have eaten it (likely Wednesday after sundown)
 - None of the Gospels mention a lamb being served because the Passover lamb would not be slaughtered until the following day (18:28; 19:14; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7, 15; cf. Jn 19:31)
- Jesus is aware of Satan's plan to use Judas Iscariot

Washing Feet (v. 3-5)

- Knowing His identity & position, Jesus strips down to basic garments
 - This was how servants & slaves dressed
- He begins to wash the feet of each disciple
 - This was the job of the lowest servants since most people either went barefoot or wore open sandals
 - Disciples were known to wash their rabbi's feet
 - Peers only washed each other's feet rarely as an act of great love
- This is an act of humility, servant leadership, & love

The Need for Washing (v. 6-11)

- When it's Simon Peter's turn, he refuses to let Jesus wash his feet, and is appalled at Jesus' actions
 - Kings don't wash the servants' feet
- Jesus responds that He needs to wash Peter so that he can take part in Jesus and what He is doing
 - This washing is a reference to the atonement work of Christ (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26; Tts 3:4-7)
- Jesus clarifies that those who have been bathed only need their feet washed
 - If one has been cleansed through the blood of Christ, there may still be a need for additional repentance & sanctification
 - Repent: To turn away from sinful behavior
 - Sanctify: To make one holy or set apart
 - But this does not require a whole new rebirth
- Jesus declares that Peter & the disciples are clean, which reflects their faith in Jesus
- But not all of them, because He knows Judas' heart
 - Yet, Jesus still washed Judas' feet
 - This shows both Jesus' love for those who do not love Him back
 - And that going through a rite, even when Jesus performs it, doesn't ensure spiritual cleansing

Following His Example (v. 12-17)

- Jesus then tells them/us to follow His example
 - Some practice foot-washing as another ordinance
- The example is to serve one another out of humility

One Act with 3 Meanings

- Jesus uses foot-washing in 3 distinct ways
 1. As a foreshadowing of His sacrifice on the Cross, which provides ultimate cleansing (Jn 13:8; 1 Jn 2:1-2)
 2. As an allusion to the need for ongoing repentance & sanctification (Jn 13:10; 1 Jn 1:8-10)
 3. As an example of how we ought to humbly serve one another (Jn 13:14b-15; Lk 22:27; Phil 2:6-7; Mk 10:42-44)

So What?

- Have we been washed by Jesus, forgiven of our sins?
- Are we continuing to repent & be made more holy?
- Are we serving others humbly like Jesus?

Meditation Verse: John 13:14-15

Next Week: John 13:18-38