

# **Our 40 Day Journey to the Cross**

## **March 31 - April 5**

### **Day 24 Tuesday**

#### **A New Commandment**

“Jesus knew that His hour had come.” Indeed, His hour had come. Jesus’ public ministry was over. In close to 24 hours, Jesus would hang on the cross. This was the beginning of the end, and Jesus used these last precious hours to serve and prepare His disciples.

The cross is not specifically mentioned in John 13:1, but the shadow of the cross casts its presence over almost every word. We see the shadow of the cross over “*His hour had come.*” We see the shadow of the cross over “He loved them to the end.” But we also see the shadow of the cross over “depart this world.” There is a hard reality behind His words. Jesus would only depart this world through the cross. Jesus loved His disciples. He led them, taught them, cared for them, and protected them. Jesus gave them more than any other teacher or leader would or could give his followers.

## **Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet**

### **John 13:1-11 NKJV**

**1** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

**2** And supper being ended, the devil having 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 to God,

**4** rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.

**5** After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

**6** Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

**7** Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

**8** Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part 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, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

**11** For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

## **The Greatest Among You is the Least Among You**

This was more awkward than we might think. First, because of the sandals they wore and the roads they walked on, the feet were dirty. Second, the disciples ate a formal meal like this at a table known as a triclinium. This was a low (coffee-table height), U- shaped table. The guests sat and their status at the meal was reflected by how close they were to the host or leader of the meal. Because the table was low, they didn't sit on chairs. They leaned on pillows, with their feet behind them. The unwashed feet were easily seen and perhaps smelled. None of the disciples were interested in washing each other's feet. Any of them would have gladly washed Jesus' feet. But they could not wash His without having to be available to wash the others' feet, and that would have been an intolerable admission of inferiority among their fellow competitors for the top positions in the disciples' hierarchy. So no one's feet got washed.

## **Let Jesus Show You How It's Done**

In all of this, Jesus acted out a parable for the disciples. Jesus knew actions speak louder than words. So when He wanted to teach the proud, arguing disciples about true humility, He didn't just say it – He showed it. He showed it in a way that illustrated His whole work on behalf of His own.

Knowing that He came from God, and went to God,' and that even when He was kneeling there before these men knowing that “the Father had given all things into His hands,” what did He do? Triumph over them? Show His majesty? Flash His power? Demand service? No, He 'Girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet'! Decades later, when Peter wrote to Christians about humility, he put it like this: Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:5). More literally, Peter wrote: “wrap the apron of humility around yourself.” What Jesus did here remained in his mind and heart.

## **His Earthly and Heavenly Acts of Love and Humility**

- Jesus rose from supper, a place of rest and comfort
- Jesus rose from His throne in heaven, a place of rest and comfort
- Jesus laid aside His garments, taking off His covering
- Jesus laid aside His glory, taking off His heavenly covering
- Jesus took a towel and girded Himself, being ready to work
- Jesus took the form of a servant, and came ready to work
- Jesus poured water into a basin, ready to clean
- Jesus poured out His blood to cleanse us from the guilt and penalty of sin
- Jesus sat down again (John 13:12) after washing their feet
- Jesus sat down at the right hand of God the Father after cleansing us

### **Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet**

This foot washing was a powerful lesson in humility. We are grateful Jesus did not say, If you do not have great holiness, you have no part with Me. We are happy He did not say, If you are not a Bible expert, you have no part with Me. Having a part with Jesus begins simply with receiving at the hands of the Lord the spiritual washing which is absolutely necessary for us to have any part in Him.

**Lord, Not My Feet Only,  
but Also My Hands and my Head!**

Peter, in his request to be fully washed, was still reluctant to let Jesus do as He wanted. Peter wanted to tell Jesus what to do. Jesus – though the servant of all – still was and is God’s appointed leader. He would not allow Peter to dominate this situation and set things on a wrong course. A moment ago he told his Master He was doing too much: now he tells Him He is doing too little. Sometimes we show a servant’s heart by accepting the service of others for us. If we only serve, and refuse to be served, it can be a sign of deeply rooted and well-hidden pride. Man’s humility does not begin with the giving of service; it begins with the readiness to receive it. For there can be much pride and condescension in our giving of service.