

Our 40 Day Journey to the Cross

March 31 - April 5

Day 23 Monday

Washing of the Disciples' Feet,
The Lords Supper, The Betrayer Revealed,

“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."

Jesus knew that His Hour Had Come

It is on this night that Jesus and His disciples have their last private gathering and meeting before His arrest. He spoke in John 12:23-27 and said that for this purpose I came to this hour. Indeed, His hour had come and now 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 Shadow of the Cross

The cross is not specifically mentioned in John 13:1, but the impending journey to Gethsemane casts a shadow over almost every word. We see the shadow of the cross over the words "*He knew 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 "He should depart this world". It is heartbreaking when you realize that Jesus would only depart this world through the agony and shame on the cross.

Jesus Loved His Disciples

Jesus led them, taught them, cared for them and protected them. There is a love that Jesus has for all people, and then there is the love that Jesus has for His own. It isn't that Jesus loves less or more but that the love is different.

Different not because of the measure of the love, but it is the dynamic of the love within the relationship is different.

Having Loved His Own

- They were His own because He chose them
- They were His own because He gave Himself to them
- They were His own because His Father gave them to Him
- They were His own because He would soon purchase them
- They were His own because they gave themselves to Him

To the End

To the end means to the end of Jesus' earthly life. Though the disciples gave up on Him, He never gave up on them. Though they stopped thinking about Jesus, and thought only of themselves, He never stopped thinking of them. Whose problems were worse – Jesus' or the disciples'? Who was concerned more for the other? He loved them to the end. To the end means a love that will never end. Jesus will never stop loving His own. It isn't a love that comes and goes, that is here today and gone tomorrow. To the end means a love that reaches to the fullest extent. Some translations have "He loved them to the uttermost." Jesus poured out the cup of His love to the bottom for us.

Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples

With short, vivid statements John described the remarkable thing Jesus did on that unforgettable night. We have the sense that when John wrote this many years after the fact he could still remember every detail. "John's account reads like that of an eye-witness who had watched with wonder, awe and on the edge of your seat suspense." It seems that each step in the whole scene is imprinted on the mind of John. 'Next He pours water into the basin,' the basin which the landlord had furnished as part of the necessary arrangements."

It Was All About Them and Not About Him

An evening before the torture of the cross, Jesus did not think of Himself. He thought about His disciples. Truly, this was loving them to the end. After all, Jesus' disciples treated Him badly and soon would treat Him even worse, forsaking Him completely; yet He loved them. Jesus completely gave Himself to washing their feet. He was thorough in the work. First, He rose from supper. Then Jesus laid aside His garments, which had to remind Him of what waited in just a few hours, when He would be stripped of His garments and be crucified. Jesus then took a towel and girded Himself. Finally Jesus poured water into a basin. If Jesus wanted to just display the image of a servant, He would have had a servant or one of the disciples do all this preparation work. He then would have quickly wiped a damp cloth on a few dirty feet and consider the job done. That would give the image of servanthood and loving leadership, but Jesus gave Himself completely to this work.

An Example of Servanthood

This was an extreme act of servanthood. According to the Jewish laws and traditions regarding the relationship between a teacher and his disciples, a teacher had no right to demand or expect that his disciples would wash his feet. It was absolutely unthinkable that the Master would wash His disciple's feet. Jesus went around the table, washing and drying the feet of His disciples, it was a dramatic scene. Luke 22:23 says that the disciples entered the room debating who was greatest. By what He did, Jesus illustrated true greatness.