

Our 40 Day Journey to the Cross March 31 - April 5

Day 25 Wednesday

John 13:10-17 NKJV

10 Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them.

13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.

15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13:10 NKJV

10 Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

After objecting to the idea of Jesus washing his feet, Peter is told he has no choice. Peter responds by asking Jesus to cleanse his feet, head, and hands (John 13:6–9) Jesus explains why a full-body cleaning is not necessary for these disciples.

Jesus taught there is an initial bathing that is distinct from an ongoing washing. We need to be bathed by our trust in Jesus and what He did for us on the cross; What Christ accomplished on the cross is something that cannot be changed altered or undone. His work for us and over us is done once for all. Yet afterward we must continually have our feet washed in an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ daily with trust and love.

Bathing and Washing of Feet

As Jesus and Peter discussed washing of feet, they have used the Greek root word **niptō**. Here, when Jesus refers to "bathing," He uses the word **louō**. The difference between these two terms is almost exactly the same as between the English words "wash" and "bathe."

One implies a spot-cleaning action, the other an all-over deep clean. Also noteworthy is that Jesus uses a form of **louō** that's past-tense, while **niptō** is a continuing action. The one who is bathed is "completely clean," despite needing to have their feet routinely washed. Being re-bathed is unnecessary.

“And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

Peter is offended by his master acting like a slave, but Jesus responds that washing is necessary for those who follow Him—*“and not all of those present are clean.”* That subtle reference points to Judas, who has already made plans to betray Jesus. A "full-body" washing only needs to happen once, while "foot washing" needs to be done more frequently. This helps explain the difference between once-for-all salvation, and routine confession of sin.

Verse 11 reiterates how Jesus is fully aware that Judas is a false follower. **Verses 8-11** gives a powerful explanation of salvation and eternal security. Those who are once-for-all washed don't need to be entirely cleansed again. That is, they have no need to be re-saved. Rather, they need to have the incidental "dirt" of their daily walk washed. Our fellowship with Christ is impacted by unconfessed sin. Those who are "clean" are those who've experienced spiritual cleansing. For such people, only the minor foot-washing is needed. But those who've never been "bathed" entirely are the unsaved—like Judas, who is “unclean.”

“Do you know what I have done to you?”

Jesus entire life was a lesson and example to the disciples. Here He felt it was important to specifically draw attention to the lesson of what He had just done. The washing of their feet meant something and Jesus would not leave the understanding of that up to chance.

**“You call Me Teacher and Lord,
and rightly so, for that is what I am”**

Jesus recognized and encouraged the commitment of the disciples to Him. He was their Teacher and He was their Lord and in this sense they had no other Teacher or Lord.

"You also ought to wash one another's feet"

As their Teacher and Lord Jesus commanded them to show the same humble, sacrificial love to one another. The example of Jesus should mark their attitude and their action. This was and is true for every follower of Jesus Christ (all who call Him Teacher and Lord), but should be even more so for those who are or desire to be leaders among God's people.

**“I have set you an example that
you should do as I have done for you.”**

Here, Jesus also explicitly states that what He's done is meant to be an example. He does not mean that all Christians are obligated to literally, physically wash the feet of others. The implication goes far beyond a ritual. The point is that those who "follow" Christ ought to "follow" His example in humility and service.

The natural human perspective or response is to look at some types of service or love and say, "that's beneath me." This is especially true when we somehow feel more important or more valuable than others. By acting out humble, sacrificial, servanthood Jesus lowers the "beneath me" line all the way to the floor.

Loving service to others is something no believer can brush off as unworthy of their time. Those who claim the name of Jesus ought to follow His example. That means humility and service for others—if the Lord serves others, so too should those who follow Him.

**“Now that you know these things,
you will be blessed if you do them.”**

By washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus has destroyed any claims a person tries to have claiming to be "too good" to humbly serve others. Human nature normally and vainly says lesser tasks are for lesser people, and the lowly should serve the superior. Jesus' teaching by example is that humility and service are the obligation of all Christians. Those who understand this are blessed by obeying it.

The practice of being a servant pleases God, fulfills our calling, bringing blessing and happiness.

Charles Spurgeon wrote: “If there is a position in the church where the worker will have to work hard and get no thanks for it, take it, and be pleased with it. If you can perform a service, which few will ever seek to do themselves, or appreciate when performed by others, yet occupy it with holy delight. Covet humble work, and when you get it be content to continue in it. There is no great rush after the lowest places, you will rob no one by seeking them.”