

**Washing of the Disciples' Feet,  
The Lords Supper, The Betrayer Revealed,  
The Denial to Come and  
A New Commandment**

**Day 23 Monday and Day 24 Tuesday  
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!”

### **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.

## **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.