



SERMON TITLE: Do as I Have Done to You

DATE: August 23, 2020

SCRIPTURE: John 13:12-17

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"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31). This is how John concludes his own biography of Jesus. He wanted the young, the old, the sick, the well, the despairing, the hopeful, the skeptics, the faithful, and whoever reads his account of Jesus to believe and trust him more fully. But what did John want them to believe? He wanted them to believe that Jesus alone brought eternal life into the present, broken world. And for all who enter this eternal life with God right now, we—like John—are exiles. For all who enter a relationship with Jesus, we will very likely be marginalized and dismissed because we follow him. So, what does it mean to believe? And how do we mature in believing? What does it mean to remain faithful to God when the pressure is on? These are the things that John will help us explore by showing us the glory and beauty of Jesus.

Go to <https://jesus.net/visual-bible/> and type in the chapter box, 13, and put in verses 1-17, hit "go," and watch the scene unfold as Jesus washes the disciple's feet.

We are continuing in our study of John 13. The headline over chapter 13 (and really extending all the way to the end of the book) is found in v2, "...having loved his own who were in the world, he [Jesus] loved them to the end"—or better—"he showed them the extent of his love." And, b/c Jesus knew he was about to be betrayed by Judas Iscariot, he knew what the cost of his love would be. So, in that Upper Room that night, Jesus showed his disciples the kind of Messiah he actually is—he is a Savior who stoops to serve and who will suffer to save (from last week). I've continued to think about "foot-washing" this week, trying to come up with some modern-day example that would evoke the same shock and emotion the disciples must have felt. There are all kinds of "dirty jobs" in our world today that most of us would never want to do (Remember Mike Rowe and the TV show "Dirty Jobs"?). But no modern-day dirty job carries the demeaning stigma that foot-washing had back in the day. What Jesus did when he washed his disciple's feet, was powerful, not just b/c of the act itself, but b/c of the role he was assuming by doing it. Cleaning the toilets in your home is a common necessity, but if the Queen of England came to your home to clean your toilet—that would be upsetting. Not b/c cleaning a toilet is so significant, but b/c the Queen is doing it. The greatest among them sees a practical need, and he lowers himself to meet that need. Serving, Jesus-style, is applying your heart and your hands to the point of greatest need. The key question in all of this is found in v12, "Do you understand what I've done to you?" Let's be clear—Jesus wasn't leaving them/us with a sacrament or ordinance like baptism or communion. He didn't wash their feet as a symbol he intended for the church to adopt as a ritual. He actually meant for those men to wash each other's feet. He wanted them to not think so highly of themselves that they would refuse to serve each other by washing each other's feet. He says that exact thing in vv13-14, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." The disciples have been arguing about who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of God (see Luke 22). They are filled with self-importance—but Jesus lowers himself and takes on the job of the lowest household slave and washes their nasty feet. He wanted them to see that there is a difference between greatness in this world and greatness in the Kingdom of God. Greatness in this world is "ascending greatness." It's about performance, position, promotion, and power. But in the kingdom of the heavens, greatness is "descending greatness"—"the first will be last and the last first," "the least will be the greatest," "if you want to gain your life, lose it, and the one who loses his life for my sake will gain it"—that's descending greatness. Jesus wanted them to see that in his kingdom, you serve your way to the top. That's why he broadens the principle in v15, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." In other words, "Foot-washing is an example of the servant's heart I want you to have." If I come to you and say, "Here's an example of what I need for you to do." I don't mean—take this example—and make an exact copy of it and make it work in every situation. No, I mean study the way this was done, look at what's important, see the parts/see the whole, and do your work LIKE this—patterned after this. So, Jesus is saying, "I'm laying out a "pattern" of life for you to follow after I'm gone—a kind of life that flows from a heart that is not too proud or full of self-importance to do whatever needs to be done to meet the need of the moment." A servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (v16). Then he says, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (v17). In other words, "If you do for others what I've done for you, you will find that your life will overflow with meaning and purpose, and with satisfaction and joy like you've never imagined." Here it again. Jesus says, "You will be greatly

blessed if you know ‘these things’ and do them.” Hmm. Know what ‘things?’ We must know the things that Jesus knew that caused him to act like a servant. What things did Jesus know? Look back at v3—He knew God had given him all things. And, he knew where he came from and where he was going. What Jesus knew led him to what he did. We need to know these things as well. Like Jesus, (1) We know who we are (or where we came from). As Jesus put it back in John 3, we have been “born from above” through faith. In a spiritual sense, having been born into God’s family, we have become children of God. (2) Like Jesus, we also know that God has “given us everything we need for life and godliness.” Paul states it clearly in Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him, freely give us all things.” Everything God gave to Jesus, he has put at your disposal. And (3) like Jesus, we know where we are going—to an eternal future in the coming Kingdom of God. These three things make up our core identity in Christ. And it’s knowing these three things that move us to take up a “lesser role” for the benefit of others. If you don’t know who you are and where you’re headed and what God has given you, you will spend most of your energy doing things that define your identity in this world. Jesus was so secure in knowing “these things” that nothing was beneath his dignity.

What you know about yourself determines what you will be willing to do for others. Or, let me put it this way. How you define yourself determines if you’ll be willing to do for others what Jesus has done for you. If you define yourself in terms of what this world says about you or how this world defines “greatness,” you will tend to act in your own self-interest. But, if you take your core identity from what God says is true about you, no form of service is ever beneath your dignity. If you know who you are in Christ, then you will be moved to act like Christ when the need arises. And, God promises you a life of blessing—of meaning and purpose and of satisfaction and joy. If you apply your heart and hands to the places of greatest need, you will be greatly blessed. Jesus says that not me.

With the Covid crisis still keeping people away, there are many folks here at FG who are not able to serve as they did in the past. That means we have many places where the need for volunteers with servant’s hearts is great. If you are willing to do for others what Jesus did for you, go to www.fellowshipgreenville.org/serve, and you’ll find five key areas of great need—Kids, students, First Impressions, Tech team, and worship. If you are interested in stepping into the help, click the “I’m interested” box, fill out the information on the next page, and someone will get back to you this week. Right now, we have great needs in FG Kids and in our Student ministry. In FG Kids, we need 60 nursery/preschool volunteer leaders and 40 elementary leaders. In Student ministry, we need—in Middle School, four guy leaders and three girl leaders. In HS, we need two guy leaders and one girl leader.

Jesus says, “Do you understand what I, your Lord and Teacher have done for you? I have left you an example that you should do for others what I have done for you.” He says, “I tell you the truth, if you know these things, you will be greatly blessed if you put them into practice.” How about it? Will you apply your heart and hands to a place of great need? Where will that be?

Discussion Starters — If possible, consider starting your group time by showing the video that we watched in the service. Go to <https://jesus.net/visual-bible/> and type in the chapter box, “13,” put in verses 1-17, hit “go” and watch the scene unfold as Jesus washes the disciples’ feet—OR—have several people read four or five verses each of John 13:1-17. If you watched the video together—ask—“What stands out to you the most in this scene?” Encourage everyone to answer.

- Ask if anyone came from a church background where foot-washing was practiced like baptism and communion.
- According to what Jesus says here, should foot-washing be something we practice in church today? Why or why not?
- What did Jesus intend for his disciples to do with this whole foot-washing business?
- What did Jesus mean when he said he left them an “example” to follow that you should do to others what I have done to you? What does it mean to give someone an example of something to do? Give examples or giving someone an example J
- What is Jesus saying to his disciples in vv15-16 about greatness? Why do you think he has to state the obvious to them?
- Why is having a “servant heart” is the mark of greatness in the Kingdom of God?
- There’s a great promise in v17—Jesus says, “If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” What did Jesus know that led him to do what he did here? (v3) How are these same things also true for you and me today?
- Has your group considered serving together in some ministry of the church? If not, do so. How can your group apply their hands and hearts to some area of great need for the benefit of others?