

Text: John 13:1-5, 12-15

Meaning: Jesus taught the disciples some important life lessons by washing their feet.

Big Idea: Jesus taught us how to serve others

Objective: I want the hearers to serve others

Theme: THE HEART OF A SERVANT

World War I produced one of the most memorable images in American history: the U.S. Army recruiting poster that depicts a commanding Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the viewer and urging young men to enlist in the war effort.

SHOW UNCLE SAM POSTER

The image was painted by noted U.S. illustrator James Montgomery Flagg, and it first appeared on the cover of the July 6, 1916, issue of Leslie's Weekly magazine with the title "What Are You Doing for Preparedness?" The U.S. would not declare war on Germany until April of the next year, but the storm signals were clear. The image was later adapted by the U.S. Army for the poster with the new, unforgettable call to action. More than 4 million copies of it were printed between 1917 and 1918.

Today, the Lord is looking for a few good men; some soldiers who will fight darkness at every turn. Men of prayer. Men of the Word. Family men. Church men. He's looking for some men who will serve him and him alone.

Today:

- Your family NEEDS you
- Your wife NEEDS you
- Your neighbors NEED you
- You're co-workers NEED you
- The Kingdom NEEDS YOU

The mission won't advance, your family won't be strong in the Lord, your marriage won't be joyful, your neighbors won't know Christ – **WITHOUT YOUR SERVICE!**

That is the very lesson Jesus taught the disciples when he washed their feet. He said, "The mission is too great to get sidetracked or distracted"

John 13 – we see the heart of a servant

READ John 13:1-5, 12-15

Walking in sandals on the roads of Palestine in the first century made it imperative that feet be washed before a communal meal. People ate reclining at low tables, and feet were very much in evidence. When Jesus rose from the Last Supper and began to wash the feet of the disciples ([John 13:4](#)), He was doing the work of the lowliest of servants. The disciples must have been stunned at this act of humility and condescension—that Jesus, their Lord and Master, should wash the feet of His disciples. Washing feet was more properly their work, but no one had volunteered for the job. Jesus came to earth not as King and Conqueror but as the suffering Servant of [Isaiah 53](#). As He revealed in [Matthew 20:28](#), He came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The humility expressed by Jesus' act with towel and basin foreshadowed His ultimate act of humility and love on the cross....

So, Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet illustrated their spiritual cleansing. Jesus is the One who forgives. Peter and the rest had experienced the full cleansing of salvation and did not need to be bathed again in the spiritual sense. Salvation is a one-time act of justification by faith. What follows is the lifelong process of sanctification: a daily washing away of the stain of sin. As we walk through the world, some of the world's spiritual filth will cling to us, and that needs to be washed away—forgiven by Christ (see [1 John](#)

1:9). Peter and the other disciples—all except Judas, who never belonged to Christ—needed only this minor cleansing.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-washing-feet.html>

Luke 24 says that at supper the disciples began to argue with one another about who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. Who should hold the place of authority and honor. Jesus showed them what true authority and leadership looks like: it looks like **SERVICE TO OTHERS.**

The most powerful people in the world are the most humble. The most influential people in the world are the most sacrificial.

HOW DO YOU SERVE OTHERS?

What is the mindset of a TRUE servant?

1. A TRUE SERVANT LIVES WITH ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

LIFE IS SHORT

Jesus's crucifixion is referred to multiple times in the gospel of John as his "hour". Isn't it good to know that the difficulties we walk through in life only last an "hour". They are temporary! This light momentary affliction is producing in us an eternal weight of glory!

Jesus lived with eternal perspective. His attention was on more than the moment before him.

CT STUDD – only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last

LOVE IS OUR STORY

Jesus loves us to the END! His love is not affected by our failure to meet all his expectations. His grace does not depend on our obedience. Our obedience is in response to His grace.

Jesus's entire existence rested in the love of the Father. He never had an identity crisis. He rested securely in the one who sent Him here to save mankind. Do I rest securely in the one who saved me to glorify Him?

Romans 8:38-39

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE LORD IS SOVEREIGN

Jesus knew from personal experience that the Father was reigning over his earthly life. He knew that He had come from the Father and was going back to the Father.

Acts 17:28

In him we live and move and have our being

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

JESUS WASHED THE FEET OF THE DISCIPLES – SO WHAT? HE'S THE SON OF GOD, BUT WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME? WE DON'T WASH PEOPLE'S FEET ANYMORE WHEN THEY COME IN FOR A MEAL.

Washing feet looks much different in this society:

2. A TRUE SERVANT EXEMPLIFIES CHRIST

This is one of the most iconic passages about the leadership of Jesus in all of the Bible. We see the pictures depicting Christ with the towel around his waist, disrobed, with the basin of water beside him, washing the disciples feet.

FORGIVENESS

Thomas DOUBTED JESUS. Peter DENIED JESUS. Judas BETRAYED JESUS. They all RAN at one point or another. But Jesus still washed their feet.

Anger, bitterness, and resentment will destroy your life. Bitterness is the outgrowth of anger and unforgiveness we allow to take root in our hearts.

Bitterness is an acid that eats it's own container.

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

In Hebrews 12:15 Scripture says not to allow a root of bitterness to grow in you.

SEPTIC TANK ILLUSTRATION

One time early in our marriage the plumbing in our house began to back up and all the normal courses of action to fix it were not helping. In fact, it only got worse. So, they came and dug down to the septic tank to see if there was a problem, and lo and behold the roots from a nearby tree had grown down into the septic tank and stopping it up. Those roots found that water source, no matter how nasty it was, and the tree began to grow because of it. Don't let your thoughts be in the septic tank! When we allow our mind to be root in a cess pool of negative, angry, resentful, and critical thoughts – it grows into a tree of destruction and despair.

Today – FORGIVE. Choose to release that person from what they did to you. Pray for them when they pop into your mind. Choose love and grace instead of vengeance and retaliation.

UNITY

Christ was focused on the mission not the opposition.

Galatians 5:13-14

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The gospel destroys classism, racism, misogyny, individualism, and favoritism. Jesus is neither Republican nor Democrat. He's not Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, Episcopal, or Catholic. He is eternal God – and the question is not is he on our side but are we on His!

There are all types and kinds of people and personalities and perspectives within the Body of Christ, but we are all one together in Christ!

HUMILITY

Christ chose to exemplify the lowliest of servants to the disciples.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.

Philippians 2:3-8

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.