

The United Benefice of Peasedown St John with Wellow
The Parish of Peasedown St John

'Foot washing love'

John 13:1-17

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

John 13:1-17

1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper

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 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share 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, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."

11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

13 You call me Teacher and Lord-- and you are right, for that is what I am.

14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

16 Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 Introduction

"Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him."
(John 13:4-5)

Five questions that these verses raise:

- How could the very Son of God stoop to wash the dirty feet of men?
- What motivated Jesus toward such an action of humility?
- Did those present fully understand what was going on?
- Are there any lessons from this act of Jesus that we need to apply to the way we live our Christian lives today?
- How do we personally respond to this kind of foot washing love?

2.2 Jesus models 'servanthood' by washing his disciples feet

- Jesus never expects us to do what he has not already modelled.
- Jesus' whole life is a model of 'servanthood'
- In Jesus' day, washing the feet of guests was a responsibility for a household servant to do when your guests first arrived
- Jesus now does what the lowliest slave would do as he washes and dries the mud caked feet of his followers.
- Not one of the disciples comes forward to perform this necessary task.
- They were more concerned with more important things like "who would sit where" and their own places of recognition in the kingdom.
- Sometimes people feel that they are too distinguished to do the humble things; they feel that they are too important to have to do some menial task.
- What would we consider a menial task? Would we be prepared to do that for someone else?
- Jesus demonstrates true 'servanthood'

2.3 What does Jesus want his disciples and us to learn from this act of service

- Jesus uses this simple illustration of feet washing to get the attention of the disciples for the days to come.
- The world would need to see a group of committed followers of Christ who were willing to do anything for the sake of the kingdom.
- Jesus raises this act of foot washing from one of menial service to one of great spiritual significance.
- Jesus uses this act of humble service as a demonstration to pave the way for the future actions of Christ's followers for thousands of years to come.
- Jesus states in verses 13-16, "You call me Teacher and Lord-- and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them." What is our response to these words of Jesus?

2.4 Life Application

- Jesus states in verse 17, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."
- The ball is clearly in "our court." Will we be content with just the knowledge of this truth or will Christ's demonstration of foot washing love move our hearts to follow his example?
- Will the towel and basin become a regular part of our demonstration of our love for God and our love for one another?

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 'Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'" What is it the disciples do not understand? What does Jesus want them to learn from this task of foot washing?

3.2 'Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet.'" Why does Peter say this? Are there areas in your life that need to be washed clean? Are you prepared to ask God to come and shine his light into those areas of your life that you prefer to keep hidden?

3.3 'So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'" How do we go about fulfilling this command of Jesus' today? Is God calling you to perform a menial task for someone? Are you prepared to do it?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293