

Jesus equals God serving Rebels

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Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] If you would take your Bibles and go to the Gospel of John, the Gospel of John chapter 13. If you're visiting with us, pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you and go towards the back. Find page 84. You'll find John 13. I'm going to read John 13. We're studying verses 5-15. John chapter 13 verses 5-15. Again, page 84 in that black Bible.

To give us a context, I'll start reading verse 3. Verse 3. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He'd come forth from God and was going back to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments and taken a towel, He girded Himself about.

Then He pulled water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet?

[1:31] Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter. Peter said to him, Never shall you wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not all of you. For He knew the one who has betrayed Him for this reason.

He said, Not all of you are clean. Verse 12. And so when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you?

You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for I am. If I then the Lord and the teacher washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

[2:30] For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. On December 7th, 1977, close to 30 years, 40 years, in Bongi, the capital of the Central African Empire, the world media witnessed the coronation of His Imperial Majesty, Jean-Bédél Bocasa I.

The price tag for that single event? \$25 million. At 10.10 a.m. that morning, the Blair Trumpets and the Royal of Drums announced the approach of His Majesty.

The procession began with eight of Bocasa's 29 official children parading down the royal carpet to their seats. They were followed by Jean-Bédél Bocasa II, heir to the throne, dressed in white admiral's uniform with gold braid.

He was seated on a red pillow to the left of the throne. Catherine followed the favorite of Bocasa's nine wives. She was wearing a \$73,000 gown made by Levin of Paris, strewn with pearls.

The emperor arrived, and the imperial coach decked with gold eagles and drawn by six matched Anglo-Norman horses. When the marine band Blair, quote, the sacred march of His Majesty, Emperor Bocasa I, end quote, His Highness strode forth, cloaked in a 32-pound robe, decorated with 785,000 strewn pearls and gold embroidery.

[4:26] White gloves adored his hands. Pearl slippers, his feet. On his brow, he wore a gold crown of laurel wreaths like those worn by Roman councils, councils of old, a symbol of the favor of the gods.

As the sacred march came to a conclusion, Bocasa seated himself on the \$2.5 million eagle throne. Took his gold laurel wreath off and, as Napoleon, 173 years before had done, took his \$2.5 million crown, which was topped with an 80-carat diamond, and placed it on his own head.

At 1043, December 4th, 1977, the 20th century saw a new emperor. If you know anything about Bocasa, he was not at all a gentle, kind, gracious king.

He was a ruthless tyrant. He tried to get rid of anybody who would try to threaten him, or that he thought would threaten him.

As a matter of fact, he oversaw the execution of children who didn't like their uniforms for their school. How nice of him.

[6:01] What of kings and emperors? Are they not served by their people? Of course they are. But have you heard of kings or emperors who would serve their people?

Not really. It doesn't necessarily happen that way. You don't necessarily see this. If people serve the king. Or how about this?

A king who serves rebels. Those in rebellion against the king. That's unheard of.

No way. And yet that's what Christmas is about. Christmas equals God serving rebels.

God serving rebels. Now, the question you probably have in your mind is, why in the world did he choose a message on Jesus washing the disciples' feet as a Christmas message?

[7:13] Have you ever heard of anything like that? I like to stump people in that way. That's fun. But what does this have to do with our title? Christmas is about God serving rebels.

Well, give me a moment to unpack it for you, okay? So here in our text, Jesus stooped down to wash the filthy feet of his disciples through the work of a slave.

Only slave washed the feet. The feet were filthy from walking across the dusty roads of Israel, of Jerusalem, of Palestine.

And when he walked into the door, there'd be a basin of water and a towel. And the idea was that the slave would come in, and everybody would come in, they would recline, their left elbow on the pillow, and feet would be sticking out.

And the slave would go and wash their feet. And the whole idea, when it says here, when it says, in verse 4, Jesus laid aside his garments and taken a towel, he girded himself.

[8:22] I mean, that was looked down upon by Jews and Gentiles. I mean, it was just lowly. You didn't do stuff like that. None of the disciples took the responsibility to do this job.

Nor wanted to. But Jesus said in Luke 22, verse 27, Look, I am among you as one who serves. See, we must understand that Jesus' foot washing and his atoning death supremely displayed his love for his people.

What great love for his people. Now, I'm not going to go through the conversation with Peter. I'm not going to talk about that. I'm not going to deal with the situation with Judas.

This is what I want to point out to you about this foot washing. This foot washing was a symbol of the cross by which a washing from sin would take place and which could only be given by Jesus.

[9:29] without this foot washing one did not belong to Jesus. And that's why Jesus said to Peter in verse 10 he was buried oh, excuse me in verse 8 Jesus answered him if I do not wash you you have no part with me.

Then you don't belong to me. This keeps going on. So this foot washing it shocked the disciples but not as much as when their Messiah would die a hideous shameful death through crucifixion.

The death of the damned or the death that was for rebels. The Roman Empire the Romans did something one of the things they did really well not just the roads but one thing they did really well was how to execute people.

They found out a really good way to do that. Wasn't that nice of them to do that for us? What's the greatest way you can execute somebody? What's the greatest way you can execute a criminal?

The way you do that is by crucifixion. It was the death for rebels. So this foot washing symbolized the cleansing that is the result of the cross.

[11:00] It's the cleansing that Jesus provides once for all and stands in the way Jesus served his disciples in the way that his disciples would show that same love which we'll unpack a little bit more in just a moment.

still I didn't answer the question did I? Why does Christmas equal God serving rebels?

Why did I choose this passage? I've been reading this book with my kids with my little ones called The Mighty Acts of God.

Can you put it up on the screen Tyler so people can see that? I think I put it up I was going to bring it and I forgot I knew I was going to forget you know it's one of those things where it's like if I don't do it now I'm going to forget guess what happened?

Yeah I don't have it with me so you know this is the Mighty Acts of God this is what it looks like I pulled it up on Amazon you can see it by Star Mead oh and she's here today hi Star Mead there she is she's visiting us today Mighty Acts of God thank you appreciate that Tyler I've been reading this with my kids and on page 231 this is some weeks ago we've been reading through Advent at this

time but a few weeks ago we read on page 231 Mead related the story of Jesus washing the disciples feet and then she says this quote the washing foot washing this is not the only example of Jesus stepping down to the place of a servant Jesus is God all creation belongs to him and exists to serve him any creature that rebels deserves to be destroyed on the spot and here's the key statement yet Jesus stepped down from all the glory and praise of heaven to serve just such rebels he who has no limits limited himself to the body of a newborn baby so he could rescue people who refused to serve him she continues he who possesses all glory went without food and shelter a willing slave to sinners and he who has never sinned died the death of a criminal and suffered [13:27] God's wrath so he could save his own killers so what I want to hone in on that one key statement yet Jesus stepped down from all the glory and praise of heaven to serve just such rebels do you see that Jesus served rebels yes Mark 10:45 the son of man did not come to be served but to serve to give his life as a ransom for many wait a second how can God serve us I mean don't we read in the Old and New Testaments commands that tells humans are supposed to serve God right we serve

God I'll read for you just a few places in Exodus chapter 20 now make for yourself an idol any likeness in heaven or on earth you should not worship them or serve them for I the Lord your God am a jealous God so we're supposed to worship and serve the one true God Deuteronomy chapter 10 another place this is Moses speaking to the nation of Israel there on Mount Nebo verse 12 and now Israel what does the Lord your God require from you but to fear the Lord your God to walk in all his ways and love him and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul Psalm 100 verse 5 verse 2 excuse me serve the

Lord with gladness come before him with joyful singing Luke chapter 16 verse 13 no servant can serve two masters who hate the one love the other who hold the one despise the other you cannot serve God in money so you have to serve God or serve money so here there's just a few places and you can look at those on your own at your leisure these verses tell us that we serve God how does God serve us serve means to render assistance to be of use to help so how if we're supposed to serve God how do we render assistance how can we be of use how do we help God do we help God some other verses for you

Isaiah 64 verse 4 this is we cannot help God for from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear neither has the eye seen a God besides you who acts on behalf of the one who waits for him God acts on our behalf and then also Acts 17 listen to what Paul said the God who made the world and all things in it since he's Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands neither is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all life and breath and all things God serves us we cannot be of help to God we cannot be of assistance to God we cannot be of some use to God how does that make sense all other so called gods all other religions of the world make their

God the beneficiary of our beneficence that people must meet the needs of that God like an employer who depends on others to make the business grow right no we are dependent upon God we wait upon God so this means that God is not looking for assistance in the world you don't come to heaven you see on the gates of heaven a big old sign that says help wanted that doesn't work that way so we first need to realize that we don't give to God he's the one who gives to us the giver gives to sinners because we don't work for God God works for us

[18:52] Romans chapter four verse four not to the one who works his ways are not reckoned as a favor but is what is due but the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly his faith is reckoned as righteousness if you work you get paid for it you paid for your work you worked this past week so we pay you for that and then if you get a Christmas bonus that's a bonus I mean it's just over and above you didn't work for that it's just a gift from the employer God is the workman he's the one who gives he's the one who serves and what does he get he gets the glory of being the giver of grace and mercy the benefactor of grace not the beneficiary of our service see

God served rebels by sending his eternal son to live die and be raised on behalf of rebels so that he gets the glory and the way he did that is he had his son who took on human flesh and there in a cave as a baby there he's serving rebels humans but how is he glorified by serving rebels he shows that he's the giver of grace and mercy to rebels who don't deserve to be given grace and mercy you're a rebel you should be executed I mean be like president Obama awesome there's a rebellion happening in whatever country whatever state let's go and let's reward them and everybody be like oh that's a great idea right are you an idiot no you don't reward the rebels you go take them out and

yet god rewards rebels we should be judged we should be condemned friend are you here you're not a follower of jesus you should be condemned because god is all glorious and holy our creator we should worship him at all times and we don't we've rebelled against him we've broken his law we're law breakers we should be condemned but he sent jesus who took on flesh as a baby who lived grew up was perfect in every way died as a substitute for sinners and was brought back to life turn away from your sin and put your trust in jesus alone and you'll be saved god will serve you though you're a rebel but wait a second didn't we just read that we're supposed to serve god exodus deuteronomy psalms luke we just read we're supposed to serve god how does this make sense then we are commanded to serve the lord well how do we do this we serve him by looking to him for mercy that's how you serve him look to him for mercy god give me mercy in other words piper says this quote good service is always and fundamentally receiving mercy not rendering service end quote ask for mercy plead for mercy cry out to god for mercy you know what he gives it abundantly people say to us oh god is so harsh how could god be so sedistant how could god send people to hell how could he do that he won't if you repent and he should because that's what you deserve you deserve hell you deserve condemnation you deserve to be judged and he won't he will abundantly give grace and compassion he loves to do that and in that way god is serving us by giving us grace and mercy when we certainly don't deserve it and how did he display that first as a baby as a baby he

didn't just come as a man he he was a baby so here god is serving rebels is totally weak and has to be dependent upon upon the mother to feed him and the father to take care of him yeah that's how so back to the statement quotes jesus stepped down from all the glory and praise of heaven to serve rebels that's the essence of christmas we serve him by crying out to him for mercy god give me mercy so as jesus washed the disciples feet he was symbolically showing them how he would serve them at the cross dying on their behalf the way god shows mercy to humbled rebels and we serve him by looking to him to give us mercy knowing that we cannot give any help or assistance to a god who owns everything he's not obligated to us to him how do you render service to someone who has everything you know it's like how do you give a gift to someone who's got everything how do you give that person a

Christmas gift hey here okay you already have that hey okay here's a card will you just leave me alone can I just give you a card Christmas card something he's not obligated to us we're obligated to God and as we think and live this way God will get all the glory God will get all the glory and so this is the main reason we as Christians must be servants to each other and to those who are not followers of Jesus see Jesus was the perfect servant who came to serve rebels and we give God the glory in serving others through the strength he supplies us Piper says this once again quote how do we serve so God is glorified we serve by the strength he supplies we are at our most active for

God we are still the recipients see that's why Peter told his readers in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 11 we serve by the strength God supplies God supplies us with his strength and so we are serving each other and that's what Jesus told his disciples after he washed the disciples feet look at verse 14 if I then the Lord and the teacher washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet for I gave you an example you also should do as I did to you see everything Jesus did was in the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of his father so in the same way all that we do should be done in the power of the Spirit to God's glory so do as Jesus did he served rebels not because he was a rebel because

[27 : 37] God showed would show he is merciful and gracious to rebels and so now you can go serve rebels just like you because we're rebels and because the God of all creation came down to serve rebels if he came down to serve rebels like us does that not give us grace to be able to serve each other we are no better I know better than you you are no better than me I serve you you serve me knowing that I'm not any better than you you you not any better than me why because all of us are on the same boat we're all rebels we both serve God in God's strength and for his glory and this service is the essence of Christmas too we give as a way of serving each other right we give so we can serve each other Luke tells us disciples begin to argue over who is the greatest this time in

Luke chapter 22 I'm better than you I'm better than God Jesus told them the key to greatness is to be the one who is a servant he was a servant to them so they should go and serve each other they're all in the same place here I am serving you when you should be serving me here I am washing your feet when you should be washing my feet here I am doing this for you when I am the

God of all creation here I am doing this for you and yet you guys can't do this with each other there something something something wrong there guys see once we realize that all of us need mercy and grace due to greater awareness of God's holiness and a greater awareness of our rebellion and that God in his eternal son showed mercy to rebels by having him serve rebels then the cross will loom larger to us and we will passionately serve others in his power once again that statement by star me that's so great that you're here that's so great

I never knew that was going to happen yet Jesus stepped down from all the glory and praise of heaven to serve just such rebels he who has no limits limit himself to the body of a newborn baby so he could rescue people who refused to serve him take a few moments if you would think about and ponder what we've seen in God's word proclaim to yourself and maybe pray praise the Lord take a moment to do that he served you as a rebel you being a rebel maybe reflect upon his greatness and his holiness maybe there's sin that he brought into your heart into your life and there's repentance you've just been broken by that whatever the case may be take a few moments of silence to think and to ponder what we've seen in God's word this morning and then we'll do our time of giving and we'll sing our last two songs with our closing prayer let's ponder and think