

Do as I have done to you

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[0:00] John 13 is the time of the Last Supper.

The Last Supper, the Lord's Supper. And the context here in verse 1 of John 13 is that He loved them to the end. He loved them to the end, to the uttermost.

And this would be the very last meal that the Lord Jesus would share with His disciples. He showed His deep love, His compassion and His care.

And He demonstrated His affection in a very unusual way, as we see through this passage. And this was to be a lasting token of His love.

It was a demonstration, a very practical demonstration of His love. So in John chapter 13, we see the setting here is of that Last Supper as they gather together around the time of feasting, of eating, of the supper time.

[1:09] And it says, Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And it says there that verse 4, The Lord Jesus rises from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel, and girded Himself.

After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. So the culture of the day, the culture of this time, was that the washing of feet was the customary thing to be done.

As a way of showing hospitality to the guests, to the home. And it pictured a welcome into someone's home, into someone's house. And as believers, friends today, as believers, each one of us, can know that warm welcome, that warm reception that God gives to each one.

That relationship, that full relationship, that God gives to those who trust Him. And this is what our Lord showed to these ones here. One by one, foot by foot.

One by one. When Jesus came to Peter, we read from verses 6 to 11, Peter protested. Peter was indignant. He was full of pride, and he was really put out, and he was strongly and emphatically wanting Jesus not to do this.

[2:32] You could say, he said along the lines of, You will never, ever wash my feet. Not now, not ever, absolutely not. That was the kind of sense of, You shall never wash my feet.

He put it in a very emphatic way. No way are you going to wash my feet, was what Peter was saying. But then Jesus says, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

And then Peter said unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my hair. Then Jesus explained that the cleansing that he gave was complete.

And he washes us in a spiritual sense. We can think about that and contemplate that as we gather around the Lord's table, even now, that he wants his people to be washed from sin.

He wants us to be clean, to be cleansed. And verse 12 it says, So after he had washed their feet and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye not, sorry, know ye what I have done to you?

[3:40] You call me Master and Lord, and ye say, Well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. I present to you a three-point sermon. A three-point sermon, three points and six words.

Six simple words. Jesus says to you, I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. He says to you, Do as I have done to you.

Point number one. Now these are really very profound, very complicated instructions for you to follow. So listen very carefully now.

Point number one, take towel. Take towel. That's the first thing that we are to do. Take towel. He riseth from supper and layed aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself.

[4:49] When this took place, the disciples were amazed. They couldn't believe their eyes what Jesus was doing. It was controversial. It was shocking. It was counter-cultural.

This was not the done thing to do. He willingly laid aside his robe, his outer garment and this was a graphic sign. As he put aside, as it were, you could picture, he put aside position and he put aside pride.

He stepped down to their level. Indeed, he stepped at a lower place. The Lord Jesus not only stepped down as a peer, but he stepped down as a servant of his own disciples.

He took the place of a servant. It reminds us of Philippians 2 where we read, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in loneliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look, not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. In other words, look out for others' interests and needs.

[5:56] Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

He took upon him the form of a servant. Back to our meeting place here, back to the Last Supper. It was a common courtesy, a common practice to wash feet.

It was the expected thing to happen, and it was common in the ancient world to have this basin of water for the guests to wash their feet.

But usually this washing of feet was a role reserved for a servant. It was not the role of the most honourable host to do this.

[7:25] And so under no circumstances would the host wash the feet of his guests. This was unheard of. And yet the Lord and Master, our Lord, your Lord, your Master, undertook this role that was reserved for the very lowest of the low, for the very lowest of the Gentile slaves.

And he says, do as I have done to you. Effectively, he was saying, take the towel of a servant. Take the towel.

Take the towel of a servant. Serve God in humility. Look for the interests of others. I read this recently. Here's a quote about service, about serving God.

I quote, Whatever is done for God without respect of its comparative character as related to other acts is service. And only that is service.

Service is, comprehensively speaking, doing the will of God. He is the object. All is for Him, for His sake, as unto the Lord, not as unto man.

[8:41] Hence, even the humblest act of the humblest disciple has a divine quality by it being done with reference to Him. Now, someone put a glass of water here for me.

Wow, thank you for that. I don't know who it was. Maybe I shouldn't thank you personally because as our Lord says, those things that you've done, that you don't get thankful down here, there's something yet to come.

There's thanks yet to come. So I won't thank you for that glass of water. I don't want to take away your reward. The quote goes on, the supreme test of service is this, for whom am I doing this? Much that we call service to Christ is not such at all. If we are doing this for Christ, we shall not care for human reward or even recognition. We should do those things quietly that others may never pat you on the back for.

In a way, that's the most precious thing, isn't it? And the quote goes on, our work must be again tested by three propositions.

[9:53] Is it work from God, as given us to do from him? Is it work for God, for God, as finding in him its secret of power?

And is it work with God, as only a part of his work in which we engage as co-workers with him? So from God, for God, with God.

God, that's how we should labour and serve. And our Lord Jesus did that. He served as the lowliest of servants. Picture that today. Picture the Lord and Master, the creator of the universe, stooped down to the lowest ranking position that he could.

And this our Lord and Master says to you, to me, do as I have done unto you. Jesus took a towel. Wow. And this towel was this knotted cloth, this slave service apron of sorts. It was like, you know, I suppose you see people wearing aprons.

[10:58] There's the sense that they're a servant. And this is the sense of this towel. As he wrapped it around his waist, there was a sense that he was clothed as a servant would be clothed.

point one, take towel. Will we take a towel? Will you take a towel? Many will take a title.

Many will take a position. Take a clause. Take credit. Take glory. Take praise. Jesus says take towel. He says to you, to me, take a towel.

What does this mean? What does it mean to take a towel? It means you don't think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think. So easy, isn't it?

We can think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Even when we have served well, we're just doing what it is our duty to do. It's the least that we can do.

[11:58] Like those in Luke 17 verse 10, the attitude of servants. These servants, they said, Jesus said, so likewise ye, when you have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

We have done that which was our duty to do. You know, when you've done what you've done for God, have that same attitude. I've only done that which was my duty to do.

It's the least that I can do for him who's done everything for me. Brother, sister, take towel. Take that towel. Place yourself in that place of humility. That place of humility in Christ.

And serve God faithfully even if it be unrewarded. Quietly. Not for acclaim, not for recognition, not for reward of men. Wear the servant's towel.

We need more Christians who will step down and just take a towel. Brothers, sisters, how often do we miss what needs to be done?

[13:09] We need more Christians who will step down and take a towel. I can imagine that the kitchen will be standing room only after this. When those dishes need drying, we're going to run out of tea towels this morning.

Amen? Because you want to go and run. You're going to be at the starting blocks ready to, as soon as the service is over, you're going to go and grab those towels.

That's the kind of sense of it. We're going to run out of tea towels this morning because we're all wanting to take a towel. Let's go for it and look for the towel. And wear it.

Wear the towel. I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. So step one, take towel. Now another profound point in this three point sermon, step two.

Step two, wash feet. Now this is profound stuff here this morning. Secondly, take towel and secondly, wash feet.

[14:12] Verse five, after that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Now the disciples were here.

It was a bit embarrassing. I can imagine if they had pockets, they had their hands in their pockets and they were just sort of standing around, maybe whistling or looking at the ceiling and admiring the rafters.

Who was going to wash their feet? This was the thing that was expected and they were all just waiting around for someone to wash their feet. All of them were waiting around looking for someone, hoping that someone would take the initiative and serve them.

and no one seemed to take a thought for helping others. It's as if it never entered into their minds to serve one another.

Or if it did, they had thought, oh, someone else will do it. Somebody else will do it. Oh, just wait for someone else to do that job. After all, it was undesirable.

[15:18] This was an undesirable job. This was a humiliating job. Feet are dirty and smelly. After all, somebody else can do that.

That's a bit of a yucky job. I'll do certain things in church, but I won't do the yucky stuff. There's only certain blessed saints that clean toilets.

Oh, someone else can do that. It wasn't something everybody volunteers for.

You know, you call for volunteers in church work, and there's certain things, yeah, I'll put my hand up and do that one. That's a nice easy job. And then when you hear there's other things, no, somebody else can do that one.

And the disciples didn't want to wash each other's feet. After all, in Luke 22 verse 24, the context, you see that in the context they've just been arguing about which one of them was the greatest.

[16:27] You know, this was about the packing order here. You know, they wanted to say, oh, I'm a bit above this one, or I've got this and that, I'm more qualified, or I'm more skilled, or I've got this quality, or this gift.

And they're arguing about who would be the greatest. It sounds a lot like churches today. The culture of churches today, and where Christians have this mindset of wanting to be served rather than to serve.

But they're missing out. They're missing it, and they're missing out. No one washed the disciples' feet as they had walked into that room. It was a courtesy, a consideration that was meant to happen, but everyone had missed.

And the disciples should have been thoughtful of one another, but no one cared. Yet Jesus took the lead. The Lord Jesus took the lead.

He stopped and stooped down and began to wash feet. And he says to you, I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

[17:39] Step two of doing as he has done is to wash feet. Now some churches have such services at times in an actual way.

We're just talking in a conceptual way, as an illustration. But there's nothing stopping you from washing people's feet. It's not the practice in our country, but wives, you can wash your husband's feet.

Husbands, you can wash your wife's feet. There's things that we can do, and we can show love to one another. There's opportunities to consider that. And this is what our Lord and Master did.

He washed feet. Feet that were dirty, dusty, smelly, stained, filthy feet. And when you come to the last hours of your life, consider this. Consider this.

If you were coming to what you knew to be the last hours of your life, you would want to do something that was important, wouldn't you? You'd want to fill those last moments of your life with something important.

[18:47] And we read here that the Lord Jesus, he knew that his hour was come. He knew that he was at the last time of his life. And friends, if you knew you had 24 hours to live, what would you do?

In his last 24 costly hours, he washed feet. Feet. 24 feet.

24 dirty feet. He washed and he made them clean. And as we come to the Lord's table, we think of his cleansing power.

power. The cleansing power. And at this last supper, the Lord sat and ministered to feet.

Your feet show where you have been, where you've come from, the pathway you've trod, the dirt, the grime that you've picked up along your way, the garbage from your past.

[19:55] It's all on your feet. In those times, I had obviously open sandals, he was not worried about his own feet. I wonder if anyone bothered to wash his feet that night.

But he washed the feet of others. He washed feet, even the feet of his betrayer. Get a load of that. He washed the feet of Judas, those feet that would walk away and betray him and sell him for the price of a slave.

And notice his example, his willing sacrifice, his selfless service. He arose from the place of honour and took a towel and he took a lowly place for you, for me.

He clothed himself with human form as he was God, manifest, revealed, in the flesh. And he took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man. And he took a lowly place. He knelt down, he bowed down to wash feet. He served willingly without reward. He inconvenienced himself.

[21:16] How often do you inconvenience yourself for the master? What can we learn from all of this? Let us learn from his example today.

And humble ourselves. What does this mean? It means look for the simple things that you can do to bless someone. Look for the simple things that you can do, the basic things to serve the Lord, to serve others.

Like I did this morning. I made the bed. I thought it would sound good as a sermon illustration. We can find those little things that you can do.

those little things that you can do to bless someone. Really, what does it mean? Make a personal sacrifice.

Be willing to serve in humble ways. So notice the steps to take in order to obey the Lord and his command, his direction to you, to obey what he says, to do as I have done to you.

[22:23] Two steps thus far. Take towel, wash feet. Take towel, wash feet. But he doesn't leave it there. He doesn't leave it there. He adds a third step.

It is simple yet profound point three, step three, dry feet. Verse five, he poured the water into a basin, began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them.

With the towel where with he was girded. His servanthood was not held back. His selfless service was not limited. He washed his disciples' feet, but he did not leave it there.

He not only washed them, he dried them also. Jesus did what he did thoroughly. It's a bit like the quiet service of Julie.

Julie comes here Saturday nights, and she's got such an eye for detail. She likes the chairs to be laid out just nice, so they look just perfect when you walk in Sunday morning.

[23:30] And it's with this precision that she lines the chairs up in straight rows and straight columns here and there, and everything is just sewn. Not a chair out of place.

that you lot come along and mess it all up. She has this eye for detail, this attention for detail. She wants the place to look good, and she's thorough about what she does for God and for God's people.

So really, friends, today, the attitude of our Lord is telling. He doesn't just stop at washing your feet, he dries them as well.

He puts the extra in. He does not stop at, hey, that's good enough, I've washed their feet, they can just air them to dry. And, friends, you can stop short in your service of God.

You can stop short in your service for God and for others. You can settle for the minimum, or you can strive to go beyond expectations.

[24:35] Strive to go beyond expectations. What kind of servant of God are you? When some people serve God, they just seem to hold back.

They give, but they only give so far. They only give themselves just so far. They don't want to inconvenience themselves. They don't want to put themselves out.

They just put the minimal effort in. Just the minimal effort. But if we truly follow the example of our Lord and Master, the one who says to you, do as I have done to you, we should do the unexpected. Do the unexpected. Do the beyond. Don't hold back. Put the extra in. Put in the extra effort. Go the extra mile. Be an extraordinary servant.

Wash the feet well. Thoroughly dry them as well. Cheerfully, heartily. When you serve God and serve others, don't hold back from giving your best.

[25:44] Do a thorough job of it. Not half-hearted. The Lord Jesus went beyond expectations. He loved them to the uttermost is the sense of it.

And Galatians 5.13 it says, by love serve one another. The Lord Jesus calls on you, on me, to by love serve one another. Serve when it's inconvenient.

Serve when it's yucky and irksome and hard. Do as I have done unto you. And verse 17 he says that if you do these things you will be happy.

In other words, blessed. There's a blessing to do God's will. There's a blessing to do God's work. He says to you, to me, serve one another.

Love one another. The context he goes on in verse 34. A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

[26:50] By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Friends, today Jesus is still in the foot washing business.

He's still washing feet today. He's still washing and cleansing hearts and lives. And he's washing as a servant would wash the feet of those who need it.

And friends, so should we be. Jesus washed feet. He washed the feet of his betrayer and the feet of those who later would forsook him, it says they forsook him and fled.

Those same feet that he washed, some they forsook him and fled, his disciples. And Jesus washed my feet. He washes your feet today.

As we come to his table, he washes our feet. He washes us of all our foulness, of all the grime and muck of where we have walked.

[27:49] And his cleansing power avails today. Of course that regeneration we completely cleansed. But there is that day by day cleansing.

That day by day sanctifying work that he does. As believers we receive his cleansing power. We need his cleansing power day by day, step by step, moment by moment.

And friends, today he washes dirty feet still. Wherever your feet have gone or will go, he cares about your feet in the sense of where you're going, where you're walking, your direction, where you've been and where your direction is.

He cares about where you walk, about the steps that you take. And he washes dirty feet still. If we will, just stop running and come to him.

Let your feet rest in his hands today. And the application of all of this is that we should do as he has done to us. It's not the pastor's business to look after the church alone.

[28:59] It's not a certain one's business in exclusion of others. We all should be about the Father's business, every one of us. And we're all called, all of us, are called to be his servants.

What a greater claim can we have than to be his servants. What a more precious gift can we find to be his servant.

And what a joy, a privilege it is, as he will one day say, enter into the joy of your master. And we're called to show mutual love and care today.

Friends, be willing to serve. Look for those moments that you can serve. Now, I love it when I see people do those insignificant things. Maybe picking up a little bit of litter or just caring for one who can't conveniently go and get a cup of coffee or tea and say, would you like me to get you a biscuit or would you like me to serve you?

Just having that mindset of service. That mindset, hey, I'm here not about my own interests, but I'm here to care about the interests of others. So be willing to serve.

[30:15] Have the eyes that Christ had to see what had to be done and to do it. Be willing to work and work well. As Spurgeon puts it around this theme, let us carry up the lesson and be always in a servant's attitude among our fellow disciples.

Let us always be on bended knee with the basin and the towel near at hand. Let us always be willing to relieve those who are in need, to restore those who stumble, to reclaim those who wonder, and to edify and perfect all the body of Christ as far as our ability will permit.

He calls on us, he calls on you today, to do as I have done to you. And here are those simple steps again. Simple steps.

Take towel. In other words, step down and serve. Don't have that attitude, somebody else will do it. Take the towel, brother. Take the towel, sister. Take the towel. Number two, wash feet. Wash feet. Do what others neglect. Do the yucky things.

[31:23] Do the things that you don't get much praise or thanks for. Do the things that are inconvenient for you to do. Wash feet. Find another friend, a brother, a sister, a fellow believer who needs some ministry today.

There's people who need ministry today. Find them and bless them. Serve them. Encourage them. And dry feet. Dry feet. Don't just stop at the minimum.

Wash the feet well. Serve well. Serve well. Have that attitude that you're going to do the best that you can to serve God. Not just the minimum.

Do the best that you can. Dry feet. Serve well. Serve well. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you are the master's servant. You have the humble authority and you command our respect and adoration.

Lord, help us to have that same love that you have for those around about. Guide us, Lord, for opportunities to step down and take the towel of service.

[32:29] To help find the feet that need attention and love. Our brothers, our sisters, to reach out in care and compassion and to do it well.

Lord, not to do half a job, but do it well. Because, Lord, we don't want to shirk or slacken when it's your work. We want to do it well.

For your glory and praise. Amen. We will have the Lord's table now. Amen.