

John 13 // The Way of the Humble

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[0:00] Thank you. Oh, boy. I, um, I always find it pretty cool when, you know, Diana and I have like zero coordination! And yet the songs just fit inside of this passage that I'm reading so perfectly. Thank you, Holy Spirit. That's pretty amazing. We're going to be today in John chapter 13. This is a topic that is near and dear to my heart because it's been one of the topics that broke me as a man. The idea of servanthood, what it really means and what it doesn't mean, and who our best example of it is, which of course is Jesus. And I'm going to share some things that I don't normally share simply because I believe servanthood should be, if it's in its purest form, invisible. That we should be faceless servants in the broad scheme of things in church. And I was sharing with the Bible study earlier just how I was, before I was ordained and sent out, there's a group of us, about 12 of us, that met together. Six of us went on to plant churches and the other six stayed within their churches and were assistant pastors, associates and whatnot. And this one guy came in late and he had rubber gloves on and he was carrying a pail.

And he just looked at the pastor, you know, our pastor and said, yeah, I just was over the church cleaning the toilets, you know. And our pastor looked at him and just went poof, like this. And we're just like, well, what does that mean exactly? And he said, well, you got your reward. Do you want a cookie? Good for you. You know, you're working on being a pastor. Your job is to serve invisibly. So good for you, you know. And he kind of did this and we're just like, what is happening right now? But it was a real example. And the poor guy, he took it, he took it as the joke. It was meant to be, but it was also a hard lesson. Because in order to be a servant, we have to receive service. And that means that we can't be so proud to say, oh, I don't need any help. Because if we're like that with the children of God, are we like that with God himself? Well, I don't need your help.

I've been a Christian a long time. I figured this out, God. Well, what we're about to read through, the pastor we're about to read through, there's an interesting dialogue between Jesus and Peter. And I'm going to just leave a footnote ahead of it, just so when we hit it, that I hope you read it with the weight that it's meant.

[2:54] Peter's feet walked on water. Let that sink in for a minute. Peter's feet walked on water. Kind of a rock star disciple, if you want to kind of think about that. I mean, he is in that moment, his feet walked on water. And yet, Jesus said, if you will not let me cleanse you, you have no part in me. So it doesn't matter how long we've been a Christian. It doesn't matter how long we've gone to church. We need a consistent cleansing in our heart coming to Jesus saying, I need your help today.

So when we talk about servanthood, it's about giving. It's also about receiving. And if you're like me, that's a very difficult thing to do. I don't like asking for help.

I was born and raised in a family where one of the mottos was, you break your leg, you walk it off. Not a loving, nurturing environment. Let me just say that. I have much family trauma that I could dump on you, but I won't do that today. But all that to say is that in order to receive, we have to give. In order to give, we have to receive. And we're going to read about that today.

Verse 1. Now before the feast of Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart, out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Right here, right now, it's less than 24 hours before the cross. And Jesus wants to spend time with those he's traveled with, those he dearly loved, his friends, his disciples, and he wanted to leave them this message.

[4:35] This is one of the only times you're going to see Jesus say, this is my example. We'll get to that at the end. Okay? Therefore, it is an example that we must follow, to serve with humility, but also to receive it.

And it all begins with a meal in an upper room. This is a departure. He's going back to heaven soon. And he knew it. And he's going to display the ultimate expression of love, which is laying your life down for someone else.

And as I was mentioning earlier, his life inspires us, encourages us, shows us that there's a new way to be human, but it is his death on the cross that saves us.

The ultimate form of love is what Jesus did for us on the cross. And the world just doesn't get it. They just don't have that full picture of love. And I fall into that sometimes.

You know? Oh, I love that restaurant. Or somebody comes up and says, Hey, I love those shoes. And then you walk up to somebody you're really close to, and it's like, I love you, man.

[5:46] What, like the shoes? Right? The world has this backwards idea about love. We often use love in what really should be like. But Jesus shows an ultimate love.

There is no greater love letter that you'll ever receive than the cross. It's a love letter from a father. Saying it's time to come home, kids.

And I know you've tried to figure it out on your own. You've tried religion, and that's not going to work for you. You've tried to be really, really good. But, you know, to whose standard? That's not going to work for you. Well, I'll try and lie less. But you know what?

We all lie sometimes. We all go through difficulties. We stretch the truth. We bend it. We don't, by omission, tell people the truth, especially if we're upset with them. No, we do have sin.

And we need a Savior. And that's where Jesus has saved us on this cross, to pay the price that we could not pay. So when we preach Jesus crucified, it's God's love in an ultimate form.

[6:52] Verses 2 to 3. During supper, when the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot Simon's son to betray him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God.

I'll just pause there. Because this all happened in the middle of the meal. And as we talked about, actually, I think it was two or three weeks ago, these meals, they were done, like you were kind of reclining around a low table with a bunch of buddies.

You know, there'd be pillows and all this kind of stuff. Your feet would kind of be angled off the back there. And in John 12, when Mary anointed Jesus' feet, it was such a public spectacle, but such a pure, pure form of love.

Not caring who was around, not caring who was looking. The only thing that love regrets is that it doesn't have more to give. And Mary showed us this in the anointing of Jesus' feet.

Now Jesus is doing it in the washing of his disciples' feet. In this pure form of love. He did not go to this cross in weakness.

[8:02] He went to this cross, a champion. And yet he showed us in the washing of the feet that we should serve when it's hard, when it's invisible.

We should serve those we love and those we do not love. We should serve not where we like to serve, not where we're good at serving, though please do, but serve where it's tough.

Where it needs to happen for the sake of the unity of the body, for the sake of our hearts before God. Serve. Have you ever heard someone lay down the idea, do you have any idea who I am?

Right? If you doom scroll on Instagram, you're gonna find people out there that say this kind of thing all the time. They lose it, right? In a restaurant or something. Do you know who I am? You're taking my parking spot.

Do you have any idea who my husband is? Right? To you and me, we're nobody. If you think you're somebody, I'll break it to you right now.

[9:10] You're not. I don't care who you are. Right? Before Christ, before the throne of God, you are his child. That is our identity. We have no right to say, do you know who I am?

Jesus has the right to play that card. But he never did. And he didn't now. No, he took his outer garments off.

And he went over to the basin that would be used to wash visitors' feet. And he took that basin. And he went around and he started washing the disciples' feet. To put this in context, this is the job of the lowest servant in the house.

This wasn't a privilege to do. You know, and I don't want to get too far into it, but, you know, you imagine you're wearing sandals around, dusty roads, right? Dusty brick, that kind of thing. Camels walking around.

You can imagine your feet get a little mungy after a while, right? So here Jesus is, the lowest job in the household. And yet he's the king of kings.

[10:18] And when we sing and we worship him, he is our savior. He is our lord. Lord of all. And he's a foot washer. A servant of all.

So the question then rings in my ear, what right do I have to say, oh, I don't want to be a greeter at church? What right do I have to say, oh, no, I don't really like them.

They asked me to do it, so I'm not going to do it. Pardon me. We are children of God. You serve him. You serve him.

This wasn't for show. Because Jesus doesn't care about image or ego. He doesn't need to defend himself. He went to the cross. He could have summoned legions of angels with the blink of an eye, with a thought, to save him from that moment.

But this was his greatest expression of love to us. And he did it willingly and as a champion, not a victim. It was humble service in action, washing feet and loving his own people.

[11:34] And this is his servant heart. And we can tell a lot by how the disciples reacted. Okay? It's very interesting. Verses six to eight. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet?

And Jesus answered him, what I'm doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand. Peter said to him, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

Peter, the one who walked on water with Jesus, the one who healed, you get my picture? If you don't let me wash you, Peter, there's the door.

That's a heavy message for those of us who've been Christians for a while. I haven't done anything wrong. I have no need to apologize to anybody. You know, I trust the people that apologize. I have a hard time trusting people that don't.

You know why? It's because it comes down to social disorders. It's something we don't talk about often enough. Hallmark of a narcissist is they will never apologize. That's actually one of the first flags.

[12:41] Okay? Be apologetic, people. Seek to apologize. Seek to make amends. Seek to come humbly to one another.

And when it's time, just say, I'm really sorry. Okay? Do that and prepare your heart for communion that we're about to take at the end of this sermon.

Peter, if you don't want, let me wash you. There's the door. And we know that Jesus isn't speaking about feet. Right? We know that. Okay?

He's not saying, if you want anything to do with me, you've got to let me wash your feet. Though there is a funny story. Okay? How many people have seen the movie The Jesus Revolution? A few of us?

Okay. That's an origin story for the Calvary Chapel movement. That's where I come from. Okay? I'm actually two people removed from some of the people in that movie. All right? And I can tell you right now, that scene, or maybe for everybody who hasn't seen it, there's a scene where all of these hippies are starting to come to church.

[13:47] They're starting to find Jesus. They're coming barefoot. Okay? Now I'll just say, in my previous church, there were some times I taught barefoot. So get ready. Because one of these days, I'm going to go out of my shoes.

All right? Anyway, that's beside the point. But they used to come, and people would complain, well, they're going to dirty up the carpet. We can't have them in here. And you start to hear that kind of wheels going around.

It's like, we don't want people in church to meet Jesus. So what the pastor did, is he would have a bowl of water with a towel, and when they came in, he washed the feet, each single one of them. They portrayed that in the movie, and that's accurate. I've known people that have been there, and that's exactly what happened. Serving the lowest of the low, the foot, to wash, and to welcome. It's humbling when we think about that. Because connecting with Jesus begins with accepting his humble service to cleanse us. Wait a minute.

[14:47] I go to church. Sorry. Wait a minute. I've been here really a long time. Sorry. Unless you let Jesus cleanse you, that's all for naught. And let me remind us, Peter walked on water.

I don't know about you, but I have not walked on water. It's like I said earlier, if anything, I've been an anchor for God. Okay? I've not walked on water. Neither have you. Well, let me put it this way. If you have, please, I would love to hear that story. Okay? That's next level. Let me talk to you about that. But I'm pretty sure I can say that none of us have. Which means we need to be cleansed, folks. Doesn't matter if you're, don't know the Lord at all today, or if you've known him all your life. We need cleansing. And you may think, well, why? Well, gossip, lying, slander. Do you want me to go on?

We struggle with all these things in our flesh. We do it all the time. We struggle with it. And it's time to repent. It's time to come to the Lord's table in a worthy manner.

[15 : 52] There's nothing you can do to make yourself worthy. Jesus did that for us. But in a worthy manner, it's with our hearts right before God. So I'll say again, Peter, through three years of ministry with Jesus, had preached the good news, healed the sick, cast out devils, had amazing spiritual experiences, saw the transfiguration, which is mind-blowing.

And Jesus looked Peter in the eye and said, if I don't wash you, I'll have no part of you. I hope none of us are arguing with that today. We need to come to Jesus and let him wash us.

Jesus did not say, if you're not a Bible expert, I'll have nothing to do with you. He didn't say that. If you don't come to church looking like a holy and righteous person, I'm gonna have nothing to do with you.

Didn't say that. Okay? You want to begin with Christ? You let him wash you. You let it cleanse your heart. It's like that song we just sang.

It starts in here. Believe in your heart. And you'll be saved. That's Romans 10, 9. Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. And as I've said before, it's like if I find a new restaurant, I tell everybody.

[17 : 09] It's amazing, right? I don't even know some of their names because I'm still new here, but I tell you, the food was off the hook. So why wouldn't I say, Jesus is my Lord as well?

Amen. So if you come to him, if you want Jesus in your life, there's no religious right, there's no thing we gotta practice. You don't have to do a special dance up here.

Okay? Please don't do a special dance up here. Okay? In your heart, just say, yes. And when you have a moment with your mouth, say, Jesus, you're my Lord.

And I don't have that figured out yet. And I don't know how to walk this path. Well, guess what?

You're not alone. We're all walking it and we can walk together. That's the beauty of church and the body of Christ.

Verses 9 to 11. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet, but also my hands and my head. And Jesus said to him, the one who is bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean.

[18 : 12] And you are clean, but not every one of you. For he knew who was about to betray him. That's why he said, not all of you are clean. I love how Peter does nothing halfway.

You know that? No, you're not going to touch me. And then it's like, everywhere. It's not in between. It's like Peter's all or nothing kind of guy. Pretty funny. I wonder sometimes if Jesus wasn't just looking at Peter and saying, stop telling me what to do.

Okay? And maybe that's a message for one of us here. Stop telling God what to do. Okay?

Sometimes we show a servant's heart by receiving service from someone else.

The refusal to receive help is an act of pride. And that is a bitter pill that I've had to swallow myself.

Because I'm one of those people where if I need help lifting something, I don't ask for it.

I lift it, I hurt myself, I regret it, and it's all in silence. Okay? Yeah, I'm that guy. I've had a lot to learn. I'm still learning a lot. So if you're like me, let's get good at asking help.

[19 : 22] You know, I shared this story earlier too where there's a picture floating around the internet right now where it's like this guy with this couch, like a three-seater couch, and on the other end is carrying it. On the other end is an office chair.

And it's wheeling it down the street. And I'm like, there's a guy that has a problem asking for help.

Phone a friend, you know? Ask your neighbor. Right? But we get into that space and we unfortunately can probably identify with that.

But that is an act of pride and it's something we need to repent from. Because we can't be a good servant without receiving from a good servant. It goes both ways.

Verse 10, Jesus said to him, the one who is bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you. Jesus taught here that yes, we come to the Lord, there's an initial washing, but there's dust we get on our feet from the earth, from the world as we walk through it.

And we need to cleanse ourselves sometimes. We need to kind of admit and just say, Lord, I need your help. It's been a really rough week. And I need your heart in mine. Okay?

[20 : 34] I have hurt people or people have hurt me. And Lord, just wash that away right now. We need that cleansing on a regular basis. We need it. And the initial bathing happens when Jesus forgives us.

We put our trust in him. And on the cross, our sin is put upon him and his righteousness is put upon us. But every day as we make our way in this world, we need to be able to come to him and say, Lord, help us start anew.

Verses 12 to 14. And when he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am.

If then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also to wash one another's feet. Jesus says to his disciples, You call me teacher and Lord?

Good. I am that. And a teacher, we look at him simply, we receive our teaching from Jesus. That's nothing to do with me. It's the word of God. We receive our teaching, our example from Christ.

[21 : 43] When we call him master, he is Lord of our life. He should be on the throne of our heart. And we have to ask ourselves today, is he on the throne of our heart? Or are we are?

Or someone else? Or an idol that we hold dear that is his? God is looking for men and women who will stand up and say that Jesus is Lord.

Not in a prideful way, but in a humble way that Jesus is Lord because he saved us. And for some of us, the light had to go a long way to reach us. That's okay.

Jesus is Lord. Lord. Nothing else is Lord of my life. No one else is Lord of my life. Only he is Lord of our lives. That's the way it ought to be.

There are many Christians who are sent to the lions because of that. Many Christians who have been killed for saying, Jesus is Lord of my life. Assassinated for it.

[22 : 45] Unfortunately, I think we saw that recently with Charlie Kirk. I really do. I really do. Jesus didn't ask his friends to wash his feet. You notice that?

Jesus didn't say, it's my turn to kick his feet back. He said, wash one another's feet. No. Here's a real test of servanthood. Because you know what? I think I could make a shopping list looking around the room of beautiful people that do a lot.

Here's the question. Would you get down with a bowl and wash someone's feet? Would you allow someone to get down with a bowl and wash your feet?

I mean it physically. Would you humble yourself that far? We can make a shopping list of all the things we do for this church and bless you. Are you humble enough to literally have your feet washed?

That's the challenge that the disciples had. The disciples weren't just wandering around eating and drinking and being merry. They weren't just walking around watching Jesus. They were actively working impossible hours watching impossible things.

[23 : 55] The emotional overload must have been incredible. And yet here's Jesus saying wash your feet. Wash one another's feet. Would you do that to someone? I know it is like our pride is all of a sudden like well I didn't wear the right socks today.

And then the other thought is like oh no. Is this new guy going to bring out a bowl any second? No. I'm not doing that. Okay. But we have to ask ourselves would we allow it?

Or would we fight it? You can be a really good servant with a whole resume of the good things we do. And that's awesome. Would you humble yourself enough to wash someone's feet for real?

I can't answer that for you. I'm working on that myself. It's a giving of the life. It's a sacrifice. I'm going to serve others in Jesus' name.

Not for my own sake. Not for my heritage. For Jesus' name. Are we doing this? Verses 15 and 17 and then we'll close.

[24 : 58] For I've given you an example that you should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you a servant is not greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who

sent him.

If you know these things blessed are you who do them. So like I said there is a few times very few times where Jesus said this is an example for you. This is one of them.

Do these things. There's going to be times of invisible service. Okay. And if I could be so bold I'll just share one of them.

Okay. This building sometimes gets a lot of people coming and going. There's some days where it's like that. Okay. There's one guy that forgive me I don't know I don't know how else to say it but he blew up the men's bathroom.

Okay. Something happened in there the guy needs to go to the clinic. Okay. It wasn't anybody here. Don't worry. I'm not pointing anybody out. And I went and I dealt with that. And there's a part of me is I learned how the scrub brush works where it's like this little attachment square thing.

[26:01] I'm like you know so I'm panicking because I don't know how all that works because I had a different system back home. And I'm doing this and I'm just like this is for you Jesus. You know this is for you Lord.

Right. And it happened to be they got anyways I won't go into it but just to say is that there are things that you will do for Christ that are sometimes the worst and no one will ever know about them.

And that's the way it's supposed to be. When we serve one another when we love one another have it be invisible for Christ and to bless another. And then here's the kicker when someone wants to serve you receive it with gratitude and thanks.

Don't fall over yourself to say well here take this take this. No no just receive. Just receive. So here's the thing if you know these things bless you if you do them.

Blessed are you. Blessed the word literally translates to oh how happy. This is one of the recipes for happiness you'll find in the Bible. You want to be blessed?

[27:09] You want to be happy? Let Jesus wash you. Let him wash you. Let him come into your heart and show you a joy and a happiness that is not known anywhere else but in his care and love.

The other is just simply live with the attitude and the actions of a humble servant. Do without reward do for Jesus and do for others and let others do for you.

Attitude and actions go together and God wants us to have both and we'll be happy in Jesus. So I want to introduce communion now and if the gentleman wouldn't mind you can start bringing the emblems forward as I'm finishing here.

We're going to take communion together so when you get the emblems just hold on to them. Take that time to pray. Take that time to process and then when I have mine up here when we have ours we'll take that communion together as a display of unity for our body.

A display of unity for our church. And I'll share again just really briefly. Come to the communion table with a prepared heart.

[28:30] Come to the communion table with a prepared heart. The broken bread it reminds us of Jesus' broken body. The juice that we will share it reminds us of the spilled blood for you and me.

This is a price that you and I could not pay for ourselves if he had to do it for us. So we look back when we take these emblems we look back and remember that. prayerfully consider that now.

And we look ahead for the supper. We look ahead looking towards Jesus' return. And we take those emblems together pray over that now.

Father Maranatha come. And we look within because like I said before Peter never said we have to be worthy to partake.

he said don't take it in an unworthy manner. If there's bitterness, if there's unforgiveness, if there's resentment, lies of omission, if any of this is creeping in our hearts, deal with it.

[29:36] Don't take communion in an unworthy manner. Be careful. Be cautious. The Corinthians church were experts at finding faults in other people. They weren't very good at admitting faults in their own congregation.

Let's not be like that. And finally look around. We should not look around and criticize one another. We should look around and learn how to pray and serve one another.

You know, I love one of the things that was said in the study earlier was just open the eyes and look around at the people that are around us. If you guys wouldn't mind, could I get some emblems too?

Thank you. Thank you. What I like to do when I take the communion cup and I hold it in my hand, it's not a waste of time because I pray and I receive it and I'm grateful for it.

The message, the meaning, thank you. And if you're new here, that second cup has the cracker. When I first came here, I didn't understand that.

[30:46] And so I took it and I just, I didn't know. And then, you know, somebody pointed out and I said, oh, that's cool. I get it. But just in case. So when Jesus was with his friends, he had this bread and he passed it around.

This is my body broken for you. Let us take that together now. Thank you, Lord. And when he passed this cup around, there's so much to that.

At the heart of it is that. You'll drink from this cup too. Do this in remembrance of him for what is about to happen. Remember, this is only 24 hours before the cross and Jesus knew this would be the last time he shared communion before that moment with them.

So let us take this in remembrance of him, looking back, looking forward to his return, looking within for healing. Let's partake now in Jesus' name. And Father, I just thank you that you died for us.

And I confess, I will never fully understand it. In my heart, I do, but in my head, I just, I never feel quite worth it, Lord. But I'm so thankful that you bridged a divide that we could never cross ourselves.

[32:08] No religion, no good works, nothing we can do, no morality can get us there, only your saving rescue. And I'm grateful. I pray we are all grateful.

In Jesus' name, amen.