

Scenes from the Life of Peter III

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[0 : 00] Radical trust. We also learned two ways, two wrong ways to preach this passage. The first wrong way is be like Peter. He got out of the boat.

The second wrong way is don't be like Peter. He sunk. And we learned the right way to preach this passage. And that is you are Peter. You are Peter.

You're going to have good days. You're going to have bad days. It's never really up to you. Christ is always going to be immediately reaching out his hand to rescue you, to save you.

And tonight what we're looking at is the Peter and the foot washing incident. It's a really famous passage, mostly famous for verse 34, which is this.

A new commandment I give to you to love one another as I have loved you. Very famous passage. So famous it gets its own Latin name.

[1 : 03] It gets its own little title in Latin. Does anyone know what that is? This is a total geeky question. Does anyone know what it is? Mandatum novum. A new commandment.

A new commandment. To love one another. So that's good. That's nice, eh? Like, that's good. Let's just love each other. Why aren't you doing that more?

Like Jesus says, that we should love each other. So just get on with it. It's easy to read it like that, right? It's easy to read it, yeah, man, I've really got to lift my game here.

This is really true. I should just be nicer to people. But this commandment is... This is earth-shattering stuff.

This is brain-melting stuff. This is not Jesus being soppy. And the reason I know it's not Jesus being all kind of soppy and, hey, let's all hold hands kind of thing, is because of the context of the passage.

[2 : 04] I mean, if Jesus had said to his disciples, love each other like I've loved you guys in any other context, it would have been like kind of a cool passage.

I mean, if Jesus was on the road in between towns, you know, Jesus and his crew kind of walked around, right? If he was with his people and people are getting grumpy and Jesus says, listen, folks, stop, take a knee.

I need to talk to you. Can you guys just like love each other? I love you. You love each other. I mean, that would have been cool. That would have been nice.

But it's not really a new commandment. It's not like a bombshell. But it should be a bombshell. And it is a bombshell. And the reason it's a bombshell is because the way Christ demonstrates that love.

Immediately before this, he gives us an example of what Christian love looks like. And we're going to zoom in onto that. So let's set the scene. So at this point in the gospel, Jesus has finished his public ministry.

[3 : 08] He's gathered his disciples together for the last time. Because this is before he's on the cross. This is actually the last supper.

It's not that clear in this gospel, but this is the last supper. So he's gathered his people together. He's the host. It's a very intimate occasion.

And if we were walking past the window, peering in on what would have initially looked like a normal dinner, we would have seen something quite remarkable happen. And here's what we would have seen.

We would have seen Jesus, the host of the dinner, assume the place of a slave, and wash his guest's feet. Culturally, foot washing was a normal thing in the ancient Near East.

It wasn't unusual at all. People would visit someone's house, and a servant would wash their feet. And they washed their feet because the roads were dusty, and people wore sandals. So it sort of made sense, and it's a nice thing to do.

[4 : 11] It honors your guests. But a slave does it. It's a slave's job. Never the host. Never the master of the house. That would be crazy.

It would be madness. It would be completely inappropriate. It would be as appropriate as if you're on a bus, and you watched a heavily pregnant woman give up her seat for a teenage boy.

You know, son, you're probably tired from playing Nintendo all day. I'm about to pop here, so I'm going to be on my back for about 24 hours anyway.

So listen, why don't you take my seat? Because, you know. I mean, that would be madness, right? That's just nuts. That would never happen. Completely inappropriate. But it's what Jesus does.

And so the big question is obviously this. What does it mean? Now, on one level, what Jesus did was an example of how we should live. Yes. We should live to serve each other.

[5 : 13] We're a family. It shouldn't be difficult to find people to be greeters, or host home groups, or help clean up, etc. You know, we serve each other.

This is the natural meaning of the text, and it's a great message. It challenges our pride. It tells us that there is no task too unpleasant in the service of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

So this is important stuff, you know. You should think about this. You should ask the Holy Spirit to help you be more like this. But there's a lot more going on here. The clue that there's a lot more going on here is the detail.

It's all in the details of this passage. Did you notice at all, like, how much detail there was? Like, just think back.

Cast your mind back over the passage. It's in minute detail what Jesus does. Why is that? Like, let me read it to you. Just a couple of verses.

[6 : 18] Verse 4, for example. He lay aside his outer garments and, taking a towel, tied it round his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

There's a lot of detail there. You've got to ask yourself, why did John include all the details? And the reason is that this act of foot washing is not just a nice thing Jesus does for his disciples.

It's a parable. It's a picture. It's an image of what Christ's mission was on the earth. Let me explain. Each of these little acts represents the journey Christ has made from his heavenly throne to earth, to the cross, and back again.

Verse 4, He rose from supper, from his place at the head of the table, just as he rose from his heavenly throne. He lay aside his garments, it says, just as Christ laid aside his heavenly glory.

He took a towel and wrapped it around his waist, you know, as a slave would. This is a picture of the incarnation. Christ takes the form of a slave. Verse 5, He washes their feet, just as on the cross.

[7 : 41] Christ washes our sins away. Verse 12, He puts his garments back on, resumes his place at the head of the table, just as Christ, after the resurrection, ascended, returned to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

It's a picture of what Jesus has done. Christ's saving work for us, dramatized in this tiny little story here. Verse 34 again, a new commandment I give to you.

that you ought to love one another, just as I've loved you. You've also to love one another. So the foot washing is a pretty awesome demonstration of love, but it's bigger than that.

It's a million times bigger than be nice to each other. It points to the, like the, the superlative demonstration of God's love.

His incarnation, his death, his resurrection. Okay, you with me so far? Good. Because this is really good stuff. All right.

[8 : 53] I have skipped over something, haven't I? In that little scene. There's a little bit of detail I missed out. And this is where we get to our old friend Peter. And it's vintage Peter too, like, a total keener, but completely missing the boat.

So let's have a look at that piece. Because the cool thing about this piece is it gives us an opportunity to talk about communion and baptism. which you'll find out shortly how I will do that.

Communion, which we'll have next week. And baptism, which we had last week. Okay. First, let me summarize the little tiff that Peter had with Jesus. So Peter reacts to the foot washing in verse 6.

Lord, do you wash my feet? In Greek, it's a bit more, there's more astonishment in this. It's like, Peter's going, Lord, you, my feet?

Totally confused. His gut response was like, I don't understand what's going on. And you can kind of understand, I mean, it's hard to, it would have been hard for him to see God in this stooping figure of a slave.

[10 : 03] He goes on to say, Lord, you can't do this. Jesus, this is not right. So Peter's humble enough to recognize the incongruity of what's going on, but he's proud enough to think that he can dictate to the almighty God.

And Jesus says, look, unless I do this, he can't be with me. And then Peter, with his normal exuberance, says, well, just give me a whole bath then. Everything, just wash everything.

Awesome, love it. Now to that, Jesus responds with a rather confusing line. So I'm going to read it slowly to you.

Verse 10, Jesus said to him, this is a cryptic line, but I'll unpack it. Jesus said to him, the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean.

And you are clean, but not every one of you. What does that mean? Let me tell you what it means. First side note, not all of you are clean.

[11 : 16] Jesus is talking about Judas. The one who has bathed does not need to wash. The washing is talking about the washing away of sins.

Salvation is the technical term for that. And the Christian sacrament, the Christian rite or ceremony which signifies that is baptism. You are saved once.

You are baptized once. You can't redo that. You don't add to that. You've been washed. You've been bathed. You can't improve that salvation.

It's like thinking you can improve a U-turn by U-turning again immediately after your U-turn. Like, you haven't improved it.

You've ruined your U-turn. As it relates to the Old Testament, baptism is the new circumcision. It's the new sort of like you're part of the family.

[12 : 15] It's circumcision, basically. You can't add to that. You can't do that twice. You know, Jesus died for your sins once and for all.

We baptize as a sign of that. Verse 10, the one who has been bathed does not need to wash. They are completely clean. So that's what that's about.

You're saved. You can't improve it. Now, I've missed a little bit here. The little bit we haven't talked about here is this except for his feet business.

The one who's been bathed does not need to wash. He's completely clean except for his feet. We are completely saved. But we are walking on dusty roads.

And Jesus here is talking about our ongoing need for forgiveness. A life of continual repentance. So if the bath is symbolized by baptism, a once-off forever thing, then the foot washing would be like communion.

[13 : 22] Something we do regularly. We regularly come to Jesus. We regularly say sorry. We regularly receive his grace and forgiveness. It's an ongoing practice of repentance and remembrance.

And we need it desperately because our feet get dirty. You know, the part of us that touches the ground, the part of us that touches the earth gets dirty.

So we need it desperately. Let me tie this up. Mandatum novum. A new commandment. So given what we've learnt about what love looks like here, this commandment to love one another is not soppy.

Let's all hold hands. Let's, you know, give each other fun nicknames. No, it's a call to a radical, pride-shattering way of living.

And how do we get there? How do we make this part of our life? How do we get this into our hearts? Well, we need to do a couple of things. One, we need to be saved. We need to be washed clean.

[14 : 34] We need to get baptized. And we need to keep coming back to Jesus and re-comprehending what he's done for us. What Christ has done for us.

And we need to do that weekly and daily. We need to do it often because our feet get dirty. But our feet are washed by the Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father as high and exalted.

So, don't be like Peter and protest that you're okay. Don't pretend that you need it. Just look down and you recognize you do need it.

And I think as we do this, as we live a life that is molded by the gospel, that is shaped by the gospel, that is formed by the gospel, the Holy Spirit will reorient your hearts to be more like Christ.

And as that happens, we can love like he has loved us. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's sit or kneel and pray together.

[15 : 56] Amen. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would open our hearts more and more to your word to hear how much you love us to know that in Christ we have the greatest safety and love.

Help us to forsake all other things for the sake of Christ and cling to Him. Heavenly Father, we thank You that Lord Jesus, You show us what love looks like.

That it is an astonishing, beautiful, powerful love. A love that serves. We pray that we would love in a way that serves as You have served us.

As You laid down Your life for us. Help us to love laying down our lives for our friends. Heavenly Father, we thank You that through the cross of Christ, You bring us salvation.

You cleanse us from all unrighteousness and draw us close into Your family. We pray, Lord God, in gratitude for the cleansing that we are clean by the blood of the Lamb.

[17 : 32] Constantly remind us, Lord, in Your word of Your salvation love for us. We pray also, knowing Your great salvation, that we fall short.

We fall short of Your holiness and the grace and love that You show to us. Lord, help us ongoing, day by day, week by week, come before You in repentance, remembering Your forgiveness and grace for us.

We need You, God. We need Your stooping down and cleansing our feet. Lord, in Your mercy. Heavenly Father, we pray for our world.

It is Your world. The earth and everything in it is Yours. Help us to acknowledge that even the things we don't understand are still under Your providential care.

We lift before You places around this world known to us. Lord, where there is strife, where there is abuse, where women and children are being hurt, where there is war, where Christians are being persecuted.

[18 : 58] Heavenly Father, we lift up to You places on our hearts. We lift up to You the Middle East. We lift up to You Indonesia and Iran, particularly remembering the work of Pastor Shafgat in the Muslim community.

Heavenly Father, we lift up to You Somalia. Oh, Lord, it is beyond our reasoning how the suffering is going on there.

Help us to serve, Lord, but most of all, Lord Jesus, we pray that You will fall upon this place, that You will bring Your grace and Your love, that You will bring healing and strengthening, and You will bring rain, that You will bring food to these people, and Lord, bring Your protection.

We lift up to You in our hearts other places around the world that are dear to us. Lord, in Your mercy, Lord, we lift up to You Canada, which also belongs to You, and we ask, Lord, as the Gospel has seeped out of this country in many ways, Lord, that You will bring in a revival, that You will pour out Your Holy Spirit upon this country.

Lord, we pray that You would be with the leaders of this country. We pray that You would be with Stephen Harper, Christy Clark, and Gregor Roberts. Lord, in Your mercy, we pray that You would, in their hearts, draw them close to You, and that they would seek Your justice.

[20 : 37] Heavenly Father, we pray for the churches across Canada, Lord, that they would preach Your Gospel, and that You would bring many to be saved all across our country. Lord, in Your mercy, Heavenly Father, we pray for St. John's, our church home.

Lord, we pray for the many ministries here, and ask Your mercy on those leaders who lead. Give them wisdom and grace as they lead. Lord, we pray, particularly for Evening Church, Lord, that You will pour out Your Spirit upon us, give us a heart to invite others to join us in the family of God in this beautiful time of worship, preaching, prayer.

Lord, be with us as we move into transition. Lord, we pray for all those who are leading the transition teams, that You would grant them Your grace, Your knowledge, as they move forward in the difficult farewell, we will say, to this building.

Lord, in Your mercy, Heavenly Father, we pray for the families here at St. John's and those known to us.

We pray for the children and the youth. We ask, Lord, that You will fill parents with wisdom, that You will give them Your Holy Spirit, that they may raise their children in the faith, in the family of God.

[22 : 16] We pray for kids, that they would go to Sunday school and know You, Jesus. They would, in their families, hear Your Word and be in prayer. Heavenly Father, we pray that You will send our kids, You will send our youth into schools and high schools and all around this city with Your good news, that they would shine the light of Christ, be with them, protect them, strengthen them from the world that is seeking to harm them.

In the name of Jesus, we pray against the devil and all his works who are seeking to harm our families. Lord, we know that Your name is powerful and we pray in that name that all the devil's works would be cast aside.

Lord, in Your mercy, Lord, we come before You humbly, lifting before You those who are suffering.

those who are hurting with illness, with sadness, with unemployment, questions, and confusion.

Lord, be their rock. Be their healing strength. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, come upon them with power that they would be raised up from their illness, that they would be strengthened to know Your glory more and more.

[23 : 50] And Lord, we name individuals in our hearts to You at this time, those who need Your healing touch. Lord, in Your mercy, and finally, Lord, we pray that You would send us out this evening the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly.

Help us to praise You and thank You in all that we do. We pray that we would indeed be molded and shaped by the Gospel and that we would be sent out in Your love.

Lord, in Your mercy. And let us pray as our Savior Christ has taught us to pray. Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name.

and as we stand, to sing, I want to remind you that there is prayer available to you in the South Chapel.

If you are hearing the Word of God to experience the cleansing of the power of the Holy Spirit and you need prayer and folks to lay hands on you, come join the prayer team here in the South Chapel and they would love to pray with you and lay hands and hear all the concerns of your heart and lift them before our awesome God.

[25 : 48] Let's sing together. in Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my soul this cornerstone, this solid ground firm through the fiercest drought and storm what heights of love what depths of me when fears are stilled when strivings see my comfort of me my comfort earth my all in all here in the love of Christ I'll say I'll say I'll say I'll say I'll say I'll say