

# "Do You Understand What I Have Done to You?"

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Date: 23 August 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning everyone and thank you once again to all of you who are joining us for this live stream from Stornoway Free Church. We welcome you to the service and we trust that wherever you are in the world today that you will know God's blessing.

And we pray that this service and his word especially will be a blessing to us all today. We're going to begin by reading from the scripture from John chapter 13.

That's the gospel of John chapter 13. We're going to read verses 1 to 20. And that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.

He laid aside his outer garments and taking a towel, he 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 that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter who said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered him, What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.

[ 1 : 29 ] 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. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

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.

For he knew who was to betray him. That was why he said, Not all of you are clean. 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 I then, you Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example that you also 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.

[ 2 : 35 ] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of you all. I know whom I have chosen. But the scripture will be fulfilled.

He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he.

Truly, truly, I say to you, Whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. And once again we pray that God will help us understand his word and bless it to us at this time.

Let's now engage in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord together. Almighty and gracious Lord God, we come before you today as people who seek to worship you.

Although we are physically apart, yet, O Lord, we thank you that together, through the means that you have given to us, we are able to enter into worship, into all the aspects of worship that we know are required of us.

[ 3 : 44 ] We pray, O Lord, that we may have that sense of being bound together through the blessing of God and through the work of your Holy Spirit. And we pray, O Lord, that we come with, as we come with thankful hearts, that we may also come with hungry hearts, hearts that will yearn after you, and that will seek you through our being together in this way, and that through the teaching of your word today, our souls may truly be inflamed.

Our love for you deepened, our commitment to you and to your cause enlarged. Lord, we ask that you would truly bless this, our time together to us and with each other.

And we do pray that you would bless all the gatherings of your people today throughout the whole world, wherever your people are joined together in worship by whatever means. Lord, we ask that you would bless your cause and bless your own church and bless your people throughout the world today.

We give thanks for this day, this day of rest. And though, Lord, we know that throughout these past months, we've become inactive, in a sense, through this lockdown and now through the restrictions that are placed upon us.

Yet, Lord, we thank you for this day of rest. We give thanks for the promises that are attached to it, that if we come to honour you through the honouring of your day and the keeping of your day, you promise then, Lord, to bless us richly and to elevate us in our lives so that we will know the blessing of your covenant blessings as we seek to be observant of all that you require of us.

[ 5 : 26 ] Help us, Lord, we pray, with our obedience. When we look today, Lord, at the obedience of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, help us, we pray, to be more inspired and motivated towards our own obedience being more perfect than it is.

We confess, Lord, it is far from perfect. We confess that we do sin against you in this respect, as well as in every other way in which we find ourselves in transgressing against you.

Lord, we give thanks today for your love, for your forgiveness, for your readiness to pardon and for the richness and completeness of your pardon of our sins. Lord, we assure us that when you forgive our sins, they are truly forgiven, they are truly buried, and they are truly placed behind your back, as it were, in a way that would never place them to confront us again, to condemn us.

We do confess, Lord, our sin as well as our sins. We confess the sinfulness of our inner being, of our heart. We sin against you in mind and thought, in the motivation and motives of our heart.

We sin against you, Lord, at times when we ourselves are unaware that we are doing so, such as the corruption that belongs to us as fallen, sinful creatures.

[ 6 : 49 ] But we give thanks, O Lord, that you have looked upon us in your pity, that you continue to provide for us, and especially that you gave your only begotten Son to die the death of the cross, the death which we deserve for our sin and for our sins.

And, Lord, we pray today that he may be the source of life for each of us here, for all of us together, for all your people throughout the world, that we may come more and more to realize that this is so foundational to all our hope of eternal life.

We thank you today for the many advantages that you have given us, Lord, in our own context. We know that there are many throughout the world who don't have access to the gospel the way we do, who don't have the freedom to meet together as we do, who don't have the ease of mind to be engaged in worship together, fearing of persecution and of mistreatment.

We pray, Lord, that you would make us increasingly thankful for the conditions that you have given us in the gospel. Even though at this time we are constrained and prevented from being together in the way we usually are, yet, Lord, the gospel is available to us and you speak to us through the gospel and you are not hampered in any way by whatever conditions prevail in your providence.

Help us, Lord, to use our advantages well. Help us, we pray, to use our freedom to use our privileges in the way of serving you so that we be the better for it and that great glory may be given to your name.

[ 8 : 30 ] We ask again that you bless us as a people at this time. Lord, we know that the crisis that has come upon us is not out with your purpose and your sovereignty.

We commit to you, O Lord, ourselves as a people. We ask that those who guide us and lead us will be led by you for there is no other safe way but the ways of the Lord himself.

We pray that you would instruct them in your ways, in your ways, in your truth. We pray, O Lord, that when we still see so much that gives evidence of a rebellion against God despite this providence that is so grievous, yet, Lord, we look to you that you would come and teach us the better way, teach us the way of obedience to you and of love for you.

We ask that that will be true of our leaders as well. We pray that you would bless them at this time with all the difficult decisions that they need to make and with all the criticism that inevitably will come their way whatever decisions they take.

Lord, bless them, we pray, and bless them with insight and with wisdom. We pray that you bless us in our homes and families, keep us protected, we pray, in all the ways in which we require your own protective care.

[ 9 : 45 ] We give thanks, Lord, for the way that you have protected us thus far and for the way that you continue to provide for us. Remember our children, O Lord, at this time.

Bless them in their return to school and grant you blessing to their teachers as well with the additional responsibilities and burdens they now carry. We pray for them and ask that you would bless their time in school to the young ones.

We pray that those who have moved on to secondary school that you would bless them too as they settle into that form of education now in a higher level than before.

And we ask your blessing for them. We pray that you would continue, Lord, to provide for them. And we ask when we are restricted, Lord, of access to our schools that you would, Lord, be pleased to come and intervene into our situation so as to deal with this COVID virus through your own blessing, through your own power, so that once again we may have restored the advantages we had and the privileges you gave us.

We pray that you would grant blessing to those who are ill today, those who may be fearful, those who mourn loved ones, gone from their family circles, in days gone by or in recent times.

[ 11 : 03 ] Bless them and comfort and we pray. Bless those who have been prevented from carrying out their plans for marriage, for other activities that they had planned some time ago.

We ask your blessing, O Lord, to be with them as they wait for development. We pray that those who are planning to be married even in this coming week and those who have married recently, Lord, will know your blessing and know your own hand upon them in their relationship as they go forward in life together.

So we pray that you would now continue to be with us throughout this service. We ask again that you would lift the light of your countenance upon us, Lord, and give us a sense of privilege for we know, as the psalmist said, that it is a greater privilege to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Help us to see the privilege we have of drawing near to you, of calling upon you, of praising your name, of listening to your word and voice through the word.

And we ask that you grant us, Lord, that in all of these things make yourself evident to us, show us your way and teach us your paths and pardon our sin for Jesus' sake.

[ 12 : 17 ] Amen. A word now to the children who may be watching at this time. It's good always to have children joining together and families joining together with us in worship even during this time of live stream and restriction.

We're dealing now with animals of the Bible. We looked last time at the ant, one of the tiniest creatures, and today we're looking at the deer. The deer is mentioned a number of times in the Bible.

One of the places it's mentioned is in the Psalms, in Psalm number 42. In Psalm 42, the psalmist there begins by saying, As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. The psalmist was here prevented from being where he would like to have been. It looks like especially he was prevented from being with God's people in his place of worship, just as we are ourselves in a sense today, but this is what he is saying.

He is like the deer panting for the living God. Now, you'll have seen, sometimes you'll have seen a dog on a very hot day, like Roscoe here, sometimes when it's a hot day, you'll find a dog panting, his tongue hanging out, and it sometimes shows that it's desperate for a drink of water.

[ 13 : 37 ] Now, when you go to areas of the world where you have drought, where the ground has dried up, where there's very little water available, and really we should appreciate water.

Sometimes you complain about the amount of water that falls from the sky where we are, but when you go to places in the world where they don't have water, or they don't have healthy water, clean water, then you begin to appreciate what a blessing it is to have water.

And when you're in a time of drought, the one thing that you need, even more than food, is water. You can go much longer without food than you can without water, because without water your body dries up, and you can very soon die if you don't get access to water.

As Amistad is saying here, when you look at a deer at a time of drought when there's little water about, that deer is panting for water, it's desperate for water.

The one thing above everything else that deer needs is water. And you've seen, I'm sure, children film, video of documentaries such as The Living Planet and others, where you find whole masses of wildebeest and other animals in Africa and places like that, and they have to sometimes travel huge

distances together to where they know there is water when it becomes dry.

Well, the psalmist is saying, like the deer panting for water, so my soul pants for the living God. What a special thing that is.

[15:04] He's saying to us, the most important thing for the deer when it's in a time of drought is water. And so he's saying the most important thing for us should be God himself.

And our appetite and our thirst and our souls should first and foremost be for God. Whatever other things we lack, you know, we can lack many, many things in our lives and still live happy lives. But we are never happy if we lack God. And if we lack a living relationship with God, that's why the psalmist there is calling him the living God. so my soul pants or thirsts for the living God.

And so today this is one of the things we can pray for. That God will keep within our hearts a longing for himself, an appreciation of how much we need him and of how much he's able to meet our needs, whatever they might be as young folks or as adults.

We need God most of all. And you know, this time of lockdown and of restrictions under the COVID virus should have really brought us to see that more and more.

[16:18] That throughout our lives the most important thing is to have God, the living God, in a living relationship with us. So today pray that God will give you more of an appetite for himself, more of a thirst for himself.

because you remember how Jesus in Matthew's gospel and the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, how Jesus there was actually describing the blessed people and amongst those blessed people were those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Matthew 5 and verse 6. For they shall be satisfied. Hungering and thirst after righteousness.

Many people in the world hunger and thirst after ordinary things, after material things, after luxury things, things which can never fully satisfy your soul.

But Christians long for God. They have a thirst for God. God has planted that in our hearts. And so today this is our prayer, isn't it? This is your prayer as young people.

[17:28] Lord, give me more of that thirst for righteousness. More of that thirst and longing for yourself and fellowship with yourself. And show me more of yourself so that I will want more of you in my life too.

So there's the deer panting after the water. The time of drought, water is so important. And for us at all times, God, as the source of our life, is so important that we need to thirst after him.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer once again together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. If we turn now to the passage we read together in John chapter 13, I want to look today at this question that you find in verse 15.

[18:43] We're continuing with our study of a series of questions from God or questions that God has asked at various times of different people in the Bible. and we're taking in them because the Bible is God's word as we read the Bible and God is speaking to us through the Bible while he's asking these questions of ourselves.

And the question here that Jesus asked the disciples after he had washed their feet in verse 15 is, sorry, in John chapter 13 and verse 12, 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? Do you understand what I have done to you? That obviously relates to what he had just done in washing the feet of the disciples. What is it that most motivates you in your life?

What is it do you most draw your motivation from? What is it that motivates you as a Christian? Where do you go for your motivation?

You might say in response to that, Well, I depend on the Holy Spirit. I try as far as possible to look to the energy, to the power, to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life as a Christian.

[20:01] And that's, of course, important. But where does the Spirit take you? Where does the Spirit take you beyond himself in order to find your motivation or your inspiration, if you like?

He doesn't leave you just contemplating himself because the Holy Spirit by and large keeps himself in the background of our lives as Christians. Where does he actually take you?

Well, he takes you to Jesus, doesn't he? What he highlights especially for us to draw our strength, our motivation, our encouragement from is Jesus himself and not just Jesus in his person generally, but especially Jesus as the obedient servant.

Jesus in his obedience unto death. Jesus in the way that he so willingly and fully embraced the sufferings of being a servant in this world. And that especially is where God's people find their motivation.

That is what motivates, that's what inspires them, that's what they come back to. Not just for motivation, but for your assurance as well. Because that's what you keep coming back to, isn't it, as a Christian to gain further assurance of your salvation.

[ 21 : 13 ] You don't look for assurance of salvation primarily to the strength of your own faith or to your relationship with others or to the church you belong to, the congregation you belong to.

You don't go to any of these things, important as they may be in their own right, but if you were just looking to the strength of your faith or the frequency of your prayers, the urgency of your prayers, the earnestness of your prayers, you wouldn't get all that much assurance from that.

But when you go back and look at what your faith rests on, at the person of Jesus and his obedience, that's where you find your assurance. That's where you say, well I know that things are bound to be all right with me.

If my faith, weak as it may be at times, is placed in him, then my life is on the right track and he will look after me. And it's always Jesus and Jesus' obedience and Jesus' obedience unto death that forms the ground of our assurance and of our motivation.

And that's what you do when you come to Jesus. You meet with this question. What do you understand? Do you understand what I have done to you? How much do you understand?

[ 22 : 24 ] How much do you know and are able to follow of what I have done to you? He's there talking about washing the feet of the disciples. We're talking about what he's done in our own lives and to the measure in which he has come into our lives and changed our lives and dealt with us.

Do you understand what I have done? Do you understand what has been behind that? What has led to that? What's been involved in that? Because the more you actually know this, the more you appreciate what Jesus has done for you and to you, the more inspired you will be in following him. The more ready you will be, as we'll see, to wash one another's feet, to contribute to the well-being of your fellow disciples. That's why Christ features so much in our preaching.

You know, you come across people and not saying you're one of them at all or whatever, but there's some people in the world that you always find saying, well, I don't like doctrine. I'd much rather hear sermons of practical things, sermons about the practical ways in which Christians can be involved in the world and some practical stuff like that and that's absolutely fine.

Of course, we need that. We do preach about faith. We do preach about love. We do preach about service. We preach about discipleship. We teach about practicalities of the Christian life.

[ 23 : 43 ] But all of these need to be rooted in Christ, in his person, in his work, in his obedience. And the more you know about that, the more you're going to be inspired.

Far more than just hearing sermons constantly, merely on Christian obedience, merely on acts that Christians need to be involved with practically. As I'm saying, that's absolutely fine in itself.

But in order to really get to the root of what inspires you and fills your life with energy, you need to go to Jesus himself and to his wonderful love and to his obedience and to his obedience unto death.

So that's really what's behind our question this morning. And I want to look at the question looking at it in two ways. First of all, to see it as a question relating to the humility of Christ himself.

And secondly, as a question requiring humility of Christ's disciples. As the question relates to the humility of Christ, you see, it follows on from that, that as you understand this or as far as you understand this, none of us understands that perfectly, of course, but the more you understand it, the more you realize that this question requires humility of us as followers of Jesus.

[ 25 : 04 ] So it's a question relating to the humility of Christ. Do you understand what I have done to you? Well, what did he do to them? Well, in verses 4 and 5 you find that described in detail.

He got up from where he was at the supper. He would have been at the head of the table. He laid aside his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it round his waist and then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Now, we're not going into the rest of the passage. That's not our business today. We've looked at that another time in relation to Peter. But the action of Jesus here, really interestingly, as John sets it out for us, the action of Jesus really illustrates the incarnation itself, his coming into the world. It illustrates how he came into the world and why he came into the world and that he came into the world by taking out human nature to himself so that he would live in this world as the servant of the Father.

Now, this is very similar to what you find in Philippians chapter 2 where Paul is encouraging the church in Philippi to have a certain mindset. But what he points them to in order to be inspired and motivated towards that is the mindset of Christ himself in his humility where he is saying, Jesus, Jesus, have this mind among yourselves, this Christ who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the form of a servant without going into all the words which are loaded with theology.

[ 26 : 41 ] What it's saying is, well, here is this person who is God. He was in the form of God from all eternity. He remained God but he became a servant. How did he become a servant?

He became a servant by taking our nature to himself and in that, in this world, living the life of an obedient servant. In other words, in the language of John, what the Son of God did was he laid aside the garments of his royal glory.

He didn't stop being God. But he laid aside the garments that showed him to be the royal son and he came into this world in the garments of a servant. A huge difference, a huge step from where he was from all eternity where he became, where he came into the servant, the servanthood that he took to himself in this world.

So in fact, you could say he laid aside his outer garments, the trappings of the royalty that was his and he took instead these garments of a bond servant or of a slave because washing the feet of guests was the duty of a slave in those days.

What Jesus is saying is that's what I'm in the world to do. I'm here to wash your feet. We'll deal with that a wee bit more in a minute. But that's what it really illustrates for us.

[ 28 : 03 ] It illustrates the incarnation, the spirit and the purpose of the incarnation, the extent of the incarnation of the Son of God taking our nature and doing that, taking the form of a servant.

I want you to imagine something. Imagine the Queen at the state opening of Parliament. A grand occasion. She arrives there with all the trappings of royalty.

She arrives with the ermine cloak. She has all the jewellery that you associate with the ceremony of that occasion. She wears a crown. She sits on that throne.

And then reads from this scroll. There's a book that she has setting out the government's manifesto or tasks for the coming session. And just imagine as you're looking at that on television, you see an official coming in and handing a note to the Queen.

And she opens and greets it. And after you reach it, she closes and thinks for a minute. And then she gets up. And she puts off her cloak, her ermine cloak.

[ 29 : 08 ] She takes off all her jewels. She takes off the crown. She takes off everything that shows she is the Queen. And instead, she reaches out and puts on a very drab overcoat.

And she leaves. And she goes down to the old bailey where there's someone there just about to be sentenced for murder. He's been found guilty of murder.

Just imagine, she walks down there or goes down there, enters the place, says to the judge, look, I'm here to actually take the place of this condemned felon.

I'll take the punishment. I'll take the sentence that he deserves so that he can go free. I know what you're saying.

You're saying, that would never happen. He'll never find the Queen doing such a thing. But it did happen in the royal palace of heaven.

[ 30 : 10 ] That's the point. Jesus, the Son of God, divested himself of the royal garments in order to put on the drab garments of a servant.

And he came into this world to wash our feet, to die the death of the cross. That's the point, isn't it? This question, do you understand what I have done to you?

You have to go right back to where he came from and what he came to do and what he became.

Before he began to wash the disciples' feet, he had put on the garments of the servant.

He had shown himself to be in his lowest place. Before he ever washed your sins and before he ever dealt with the need of your soul and before he ever came into your life, he came into this world

as the servant of the Father and as the servant of the Father, he lived that life of obedience that ended in the death of the cross.

And what did he do it for? He did it for our salvation. He did it so that we would have hope in our hearts. He did it so as to remove us from the pit that we had dug ourselves into in our sin.

[ 31 : 21 ] That's what Jesus did. And that's what led to him washing our feet and sanctifying us, cleansing us from our sin.

And then, when did Jesus do this? This is a question relating as we're saying to the humility of Jesus. This is what he did, but when did he do this? When did he actually carry out the washing of his disciples' feet?

Well, look at it in verse 3. When knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, that he had come from God and was going back to God, he rose from the supper.

Similar to the beginning of the chapter, knowing that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father. In other words, Jesus did this fully cognizant, fully aware of his status as who he was and what he had come into this world to do.

That's why in verse 14, you see he's saying to them, we'll take up this verse in a minute, but look what he's saying there. Verse 13, you call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

[ 32 : 25 ] If I then you're Lord and teacher, you see what he's saying to them, you're right in recognizing me as your Lord, but I knew myself, he's saying, to be your Lord when I stooped down and washed your feet.

I did it fully cognizant of who I was and what I'd become. And that's the same. Philippians 2, verse 6, and Hebrews 5, verse 8, though he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, the Hebrews text.

Philippians 2, and verse 6, which we read a short time ago, refers to the same thing, which, though he is in the form of God, he is fully God, yet he made himself nothing or of no reputation, taking the form of a servant.

The point here is this, the fact that Jesus knew himself to be the Son of God, to be invested with the royal dignity and status of being God, no less, he did not use that as an argument against becoming a servant.

That did not stand in the way of his willingness to divest himself of the trappings of royalty and become a servant for our benefit. He did this at that time, knowing himself to be the Son of God, knowing that he was going to go back to God, and he pushed through with this obedient service.

[ 33 : 58 ] Now you recall something else happening about this time, and that was the dispute that was taking place among the disciples, which Luke tells us about in chapter 22, when it speaks about the institution of the Lord's Supper, and then it says that dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.

For who is the greater? The one who reclines at table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? Is he not the greater? He said this, but I am among you as the one who serves.

That's what Jesus did. He washed the feet of the disciples as the one who serves, because that's why he had come into the world.

It's a question related to the humility, of Christ. And you know, the greatest theology of all is what you find in the person and the work of Jesus. And the more we understand of that, the more it will have an impact on what we do for him and for one another.

[ 35 : 23 ] So the more we understand this humility of Jesus, where he came from, who he is, what he came to do, what he did, what he carried out, what it meant for him, what suffering was involved, what lowliness, what humiliation, what humility, the more you are then motivated, surely, and inspired in following that example.

So we'll now go on to see, to actually be to each other what we should be, as well as to God. So it's a question relating to the humility of Christ. It's a question, secondly, that requires humility of Christ's disciples.

we'll go back again to verse 13 and 14. You call me teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

See, that's an argument from the greater thing to the lesser thing. He is saying, if I have done this, I who am the Son of God, if I have done this to you, then you also ought to wash one another's feet. See, that argument from the greater to the lesser is such a powerful argument. What he's really saying is, if it's the case as it is, that I have gone so far as to do this to you, if I have stooped myself down, if I have gone on my knees to wash your feet, there is no argument against you washing one another's feet.

[ 36 : 53 ] If I have loved you to this extent, there is no argument against you loving one another in every possible way you can. That's the strength of the case.

John in his first letter puts it very similarly, where you find there 1 John chapter 3 verses 13 to 16, where you find John actually stating there in terms of love by this, we know love that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

But if anyone has this world's good and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth.

What Jesus is saying is, I have loved you, my disciples, not just in talk, not just in theory, but in deed, in act and in truth. Where would we be if Jesus had only had a love for his people in his mind and not in actions?

What he's saying is, the actions that you've seen me performing in washing your feet are the greatest argument in favour of your commitment to washing one another's feet.

[ 38 : 15 ] For I have given you an example, he says, in verse 15 of chapter 13 of John, I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you.

In other words, as we seek to replicate that and follow that example, and of course, Christian life is more than just following the example of Jesus said in Scripture, it's being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do that, it's being born again to enable us to do that, but the point is, he is still the example and that's what he called himself here.

I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done to you. And in replicating that, let's remember, friends, that our service to one another begins at the point of humility, at the point of being humble.

And remember, being humble is not the same thing as being humbled. The children of Israel many times were humbled in their walk through the desert, in their travels through the desert for 40 years. Many times they were humbled. They were humbled because they cried out for food. They didn't have food. They didn't have water. They had many things that they complained about. They were humbled because God in his providence at times humbled them.

[ 39 : 34 ] But it doesn't mean that they became humble people. It's a very different thing. You can be humbled today through your circumstances. It doesn't mean your heart is humble. What Jesus is talking about is being humble in the way in which he showed his humility and humbleness.

Being the children of God, having the status of being the children of God, which we have if we're in Christ, that's a most humbling privilege.

If anybody comes to you and says, I'm a Christian, that's really put me above most other people, and because of my privileges, I've been elevated, and this is where I am, and this is my status, and I'm glorying in this.

Jesus is saying, the more you understand your privileges as a son of God and being a child of God, the more you understand what's gone towards that and the humbling of Christ himself, the more humble a person you're going to be.

And the more humble a person you are, the stronger a person you are. The more equipped you are to actually practically wash the feet of one another. What does he mean by washing the feet of one another?

[ 40 : 46 ] Well, the actual act of washing is itself, I think, important as far as it goes. We mustn't stretch it out too far, but in those days when you walked from one place to another and you're invited to somebody's home and you walked with sandals and didn't have socks as you have nowadays, with sandals, although some people of course still do have sandals without socks, but in those days your feet would gather dust and even if you'd had a wash before you left home, by the time you got to wherever you were going, your feet would need to be washed and that's the picture you have here, the seventh and house comes to wash the feet.

But what Jesus is indicating by that you are to wash one another's feet is that whenever we are soiled by our path through this world as we all are, we all have our faults, we all have our failures, we all need to be help to each other to deal with the soiling of our feet in the ways of sin.

We contract defilement from day to day and of course only God can forgive that sin, but what I'm saying is this passage teaches us how we need to be there for each other. When I fall, when I stumble, I have an expectation that my fellow Christians will help me get up, that they will wash the dirt of that fall from my feet.

And my fellow Christians have an expectation that if I have to do that for them, I have to be willing to do that for them as much as to let them do it for me. I have given you, Jesus said, an example that you should wash one another's feet, that you should help each other on the way in which you're travelling heavenwards.

And that begins not from a pedestal above other people. You cannot wash somebody else's feet if you're sitting on a chair three or four feet above them. You have to be actually kneeling in front of them.

[ 42 : 51 ] Jesus would have knelt to wash the feet of these disciples. He didn't do it standing up. He didn't do it on a pedestal above them, on a dice above them.

He would have knelt and he would have taken their feet. As he knelt in front of them. And he would have washed them and carefully dried them with a towel around his waist. And isn't that telling us something?

That you cannot wash the feet of somebody else without kneeling, without being humble, without being humble to the extent that you realise, well, this is my duty and it's my privilege to help this person to get back on their feet again, to deal with what's come into their life, to bring them back into the right course.

That's the starting point for washing one another's feet. Humility. Not in saying, well, I don't mind washing some people's feet, but I don't want to wash her feet or his feet.

I don't mind helping some Christians get back on the right track, but I don't think I can do it with that person. And it's the same in receiving help from other people, and this is important as well, the willingness to receive the help.

[ 44 : 10 ] And it's a difficult thing at times, just to admit to the fact that we need that help, and we cannot cope on our own, that we need to draw from the fellowship, from the strength of fellowship that we have as Christ's people, as Christ's disciples, and that we are to be willing to be helped by whoever is content and able to do that for us.

I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done to you. And then if you go forward, just to finish with our study today, go forward in the chapter, and there's something else very interesting that ties very closely in with this.

He's saying in verse 34, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have loved one for another. Now you see, there's something very important being tied together for us here in taking the whole passage together.

Jesus is really tying together humility and love in such a way that shows us they are inseparably joined. Washing one another's feet in humility is really so closely joined to loving one another that they're pretty much one and the same.

[ 45 : 33 ] Washing one another's feet is the practical flowing out of our love for one another. Helping one another through the issues of our Christian lives is really the outcome of being Christians and having love for one another.

It's the key, isn't it? this pairing of humility and love is the key to a healthy fellowship, to healthy church unity, to being a community or a family of people who love one another as we love the Lord. You know, that's exactly what you have in Philippians 2. Again, we keep coming back to this passage, understandably, it's such a great passage. But you notice how it begins. If there is any comfort of love, any participation in the Spirit and so on, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind, do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourself.

And you know, as I go on in my Christian life trying to live as a Christian from day to day, I'm convinced that that is one of the most difficult verses in the Bible. in humility, count others more significant than yourselves.

You're not just saying to us, count others as significant as yourselves or yourselves as significant as others. Just count others more significant than yourself because that's the blow to pride, isn't it?

[ 47 : 09 ] And the more you give blows to pride, the more humble you will be in actuality. And that's really what Jesus is doing in this demonstration of washing the disciples' feet.

You look very, very hard, as hard as you like, into the words, into the imagery, into the description of the event. And the one thing you will not find there is a trace of pride.

You will not find anything there saying, I can't do this. I'm the son of God. I can't go as far as to wash their feet and dry them with this towel. I can't present myself and be myself a servant for their benefit.

We have to deal with our pride, and it's not an easy thing. And in dealing with our pride, one of the ways that we do it is in considering others better, more significant than ourselves.

That's why I'm saying it's one of the most difficult verses in the whole of the New Testament, because it really touches on something in me and in you that is so desperately difficult to get rid of, and that's my personal pride.

[ 48 : 23 ] And I need to get rid of it, and I need to kill it if I'm going to be a Christ-like Christian. I have given you an example, he said, that you should wash one another's feet.

If I have done it as the Lord, there's no argument in favour of you not doing it for each other. So let's enter more deeply, day by day as we can, into this understanding of Jesus and what he has done. Because the more we do that and the more we appreciate that, the more ready we will be and able we will be to wash the feet of one another.

May God bless his word to us. Let's pray. Lord, help us to be humble. We know that it is contrary to our sinful nature, but we know that through the energy and ministry of your Holy Spirit, Lord, you enable us to deal with the pride that is attached to our sinfulness.

We pray that you would help us, Lord, today by your Spirit to be more fully humble in following your own example and to be more like you in every aspect of our lives.

[ 49 : 33 ] Bless any today, Lord, we pray. You have been listening to the gospel and are still not savingly related to you. You have not given the pride of their hearts over so as to be ruled by yourself.

Lord, we pray today that you would be active in our midst to win our hearts to yourself and to enable us to give our heart and mind willingly to you and deposit our life into your hands.

Bless us, we pray, with the blessings of salvation. Continue with us now throughout this day and be with us in the evening as we again give a mind to the teaching of your word.

Hear us, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now we're going to conclude worship for the moment in Psalm 36. Psalm 36, and that's in the, in the St.

Sam's version of Psalm 36, and that's at verse 5. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord. It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

[ 50 : 40 ] Verses 5 to 9, we're going to sing to a tune St. Columba. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.

God. It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep.

How precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings, both high and low, find shelter in the shadow of your wings.

[ 52 : 20 ] They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight, for with you is the source of life life.

In your light we see light. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Once again, thank you very much for watching, for taking part in the service of worship.

Please do join online again this evening at 6.30 when Reverend Kenny I will be conducting the service then.

In the meantime, may God bless you all and keep you safe and make the rest of the day a blessing to you. Thank you.