

Discussion Notes
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On the Way to Easter Part 3
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John 13

The foot-washing scene in John 13 is unparalleled in ancient literature. There is nothing like it. It is an astounding view of God and man's interaction through the person of Jesus.

We find the scene in an intimate table setting – the Last Supper:

- Just Jesus and the twelve.
- After the triumphant entry, and the raising of Lazarus.
- Also during Passover, the great liberation feast.
- This is Jesus' farewell speech, his final words.
- Unlike many famous ancient people, Jesus' final speech starts with no words at all, but an action.

John has made four critical things known to us the moments before Jesus washes his disciples feet:

- This is the hour of the Father, he has put all things into Jesus' hands.
 - Jesus will love, to the end.
 - Satan and Judas' heart.
- Jesus will make "all things" new as God.

In light of this, John will show us that it is Jesus' crucifixion (not his resurrection) that is his "glorification". God's true glory lies in the cross, where he shows his great love for the world, and deals with death and sin once and for all.

V4-5

- Jesus moves from the center, to the periphery. He's not central.
- He takes off his outer garment like a servant.
- It all seems very wrong, on many cultural levels.
- The washing of feet would normally happen before the meal. Jesus moves it to the center to be the main illustration of his words.

V6-7

- Peter loves Jesus, so he wishes not to have Jesus do this seemingly degrading thing.
- Jesus says this must happen, we must accept this with humility. He draws the line with Peter.
- There is evidence that Jewish slaves would not be required to remove the sandals of their masters. It was too degrading.
- Peter is initially governed by his own culture, but when Jesus enters the picture we must be governed by his kingdom culture.

V8

- Jesus speaks directly, *"we are done here, if I can't wash you."*
- Without the foot-washing, communion, the eating and drinking means nothing.

V9

- Peter back peddles. Not in a comical way. He doesn't want to miss what Jesus is about and what he's been invited into.

V10

- The "you" is plural. This extends to everyone who accepts Jesus.
- Not all are clean because Judas has already let Satan into his heart.

V12-13

- This breaks down the walls between servants and masters in the Christian community. We're not all in the same boat, we're all servants of one another.
- When Christians eat together, when they gather, things look different. The Apostles must model this or they will miss the whole point of message they carry.

Why and what does this mean for us?

- This shows us who Jesus is, and who the Father really is. It can smash some incorrect paradigms.
- This model is our new identity, our new way of being. Jesus commissions us into this way of life.

What if at Lent we gave up:

- Being domineering.
- Emotional manipulation.
- Having to have the last word.

What if we served like Jesus? By this he changed the world, and we can along with him.

Discussion Questions:

- What has the foot washing meant to you in the past?
- What strikes you about this scene?
- How does this passage challenge some of our views of God?
- How does this passage challenge you as you live as a Christian? In Christian community, and in the world?

