

24 Hours: The Last Supper

Last 24 Hours of Christ

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This morning as we gather in this place whether in person or online, we come under the auspice, under the umbrella of what you and I know as Christianity. In fact, there are many words that we use to describe our faith, we speak of mercy, we speak of grace, we speak of forgiveness, we speak of salvation, but all those words are centered upon who Jesus Christ was and is in our respective lives, and yet when you look at the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ from his birth that we celebrate at Christmas time to his resurrection that we celebrate at Easter, it's approximately 12,000 days in length yet we're only given a snapshot in the gospel accounts particularly of those last 3 ½ years but it's interesting that in the four gospel accounts that we have of the life, the ministry of Jesus Christ, the last week of his life and ministry is on prominent display and, in fact, it is the last day that the most attention is given to and why is that? I know it's a simple rhetorical answer but think it out with me. If all of the miracles of Jesus had taken place just as the Bible recorded, if all the teachings were spoken just as the Bible records them, the three men who were healed of their blindness, the people that were raised from the dead, the great Sermon on the Mount, all those things, all the things that we have listed in the gospel, all the things that we have shared in the gospel, if Jesus Christ had not risen from the grave, they would mean nothing, they would just be the words of another man, the actions of another man. But the Lord knew and the gospel writers confirm for us that it is the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the linchpin, it is the key component, it is that which Christianity is not Christian without.

So today, I want to invite you on a journey, a journey in this season of our church's life, a journey that will take several months but only cover about 24 hours. I want to take you on a journey through that final day, those last 24 hours that begins at what we know as the Last Supper and it ends with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus placing the body of Jesus into that borrowed tomb, over the course of those 24 hours we're going to see denial, we're going to see betrayal, we're going to hear prayers and hear teachings, we're going to see things maybe in a new light that we've never seen them before, but all for this reason and purpose, that if what we're about to study in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ did not occur as the Bible shares that it did, then we would have no reason to sing that grace is amazing, we would have no reason to gather at this place to do that which we've done and continue therein.

So today as we begin this journey through that critical day in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, I want to invite you to go to John 13 and John 13 begins in the gospel of John what we know as the farewell discourse. For the next four to five chapters, it's not just going to encompass 24 hours, it's going to be really about three or four hours. Think about that, almost 20% of the gospel of John takes place in less than six hours worth of time. But there in chapter 13, we find ourselves at what we collectively call the last supper and chronologically speaking when we talk about 24 hours, what we know as a meal in Jesus' day would have begun about suppertime, about the setting of the sun. We know that when they took his body off the cross it was right before the sunset because the Sabbath was approaching. And so it only makes sense that this is where we would begin, that that last 24 hours begins at what you and I call the Last Supper.

In John 13, beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Now if we're going to walk through any time period of life, particularly a time period as critical as these last 24 hours, there are some very strategic questions that we need to address and I think the first one is simply this: when does this story take place? When does Jesus, shall we say, wash their feet and teach what we're going to study today? The phraseology that I've used may seem a little backwards to you but it's the end of the beginning. The end of the beginning, you see, what we know as supper, notice it said as supper ended, it was very different in Jesus' day than ours, in fact, for a lot of us, our way

of eating meals is a very simple process, we pull over to an establishment, we order a number 4 super size and then we quickly gulp it down while we're making our way to work. If we so incline to use a restful approach, we will go to a restaurant, we will sit down over a course of several courses, and I think we've all been there where you just kind of get the feeling that they want the table open for another party, and that which maybe is an hour to maybe 90 minutes commences quickly. In Jesus' day, particularly at the feast of unleavened bread, particularly when it came to Passover, it was not a drive-through, fast-food restaurant, it wasn't even 90 minutes, this would have been a two to three hour experience, and it would be during this famous meal that he would take the bread and the wine and he would talk about the new covenant of his body that he would offer his blood that he would shed.

Why is that so critical? Because when what we've just read took place according to what we just read, it was at the end of supper. Jesus did not wash their feet at the beginning, he washed their feet at the end, and allow me to share with you what that opens up for us because in those days, they had a different version of no shirt, no shoes, no service. Today, we see those signs all the time, in fact, sometimes they add other parameters if you want to enter their establishment, but in Jesus' day when you were to go and to recline and eat in such manner, the feet would always be washed because you were tracking in the dirt of the street, and we know as we'll discuss in a moment, that this was a wealthy man's house, it would have been very ornate, they're in an upper room. And so even though, I don't want to take away from Jesus washing dirty feet, I think we can find a lot of examples of him being a servant not just to the disciples but to a variety of people, does it strike you odd that he's washing feet at the end of the meal? I mean, after all, it should take place before the meal. It should take place long before they got to the upper room, much less before all the food came in. Washing feet after a meal makes no logical sense unless it's more than washing feet. It's more than just putting the towel upon the toes. It's what Jesus is showing them. It's what he is sharing with them. It's what he's communicating with them.

So this entire account that we just read that initiates what we know as this final day in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, when he washes their feet is critical to understanding the message that he's going to communicate. Then we've got to address who's present. This is critical because over the course of the next 24 hours, this will be the last time that all the disciples are together. I mean, think about it, when Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane praying that prayer of anguish, oh sure they're present but it is Peter, James and John who are in the innermost parts. When he's faced in that illegal trial, the Bible speaks about a disciple who's on the inside, Peter's on the outside, but we know not where the rest are. By the time we get to the cross, we know that John is there with the women but this is the very last time that he will have the audience of all of them. This is critical because what does he do? He washes their feet and tells them to go and do likewise. He knows this is the last time he'll have the whole group together. He knows this is the last time that everybody will be before him. He knows what is coming.

Not only does he have the whole group before him, notice that Judas is prominently present. Notice what it says in verse 2, "And supper being ended, the devil having now

put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." If you want the chronology you've got to go to the gospel of Luke 22 which shares with us that when he met with the scribes, when he met with the Pharisees, it said something about Judas that you don't see with anybody else in the Bible, it says Satan entered him. Now we're not going to do an entire discourse on Judas today. He's going to get his own message as we walk through this journey but do you find it interesting that oftentimes the sympathy that we have, even times the empathy we have for this character known as Judas the Bible makes it clear that Jesus knew he had already conspired, he had already been entered upon by Satan himself, in fact, if you'll fast forward to verse 27, I want you to notice what happens after supper. It says, "And after the sop Satan entered into him," that would chronologically be time number 2, "Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." So not only do you have the disciples together for the last time with Jesus sharing a very critical message, the message that Jesus shared was heard and seen by the very one who will be commissioned to betray him and desiring to destroy him. It's almost as if we have all metrics present at one time.

Then there's the where, where does it happen? Well, it says it's in an upper room. That may not seem significant to us in our culture today but this meant that it was a place of great prominence. You may remember the story earlier in the gospel accounts Jesus told the disciples, "Go into town and when you find an animal tied up a certain way, go and loose him and when the master asks you why you need of him, tell him that you need to borrow his room for the Passover feast." The location is critical because this room, this dwelling place, this house, wasn't in the suburbs of Jerusalem, it wasn't on the outskirts of Galilee, it was within visual eyesight of the very place that he would be illegally tried and the very place that he would hang for the sins of humanity, and even within eyesight of the very place that we discover that he would raise from the dead.

Not only would it have been large and most likely opulent based on who the owner therein was but I want you to notice something very important: it was borrowed. He didn't own it. He didn't have a deed to it. The disciples didn't have ownership therein. Do you find it interesting that the first event in the last 24 hours and the last event both include something very significant that is borrowed? The upper room is borrowed for what Jesus is about to do, and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is borrowed for his burial of three days and three nights.

So what we have lying before us is a 24 hour time period that will be like none other. The God, the Creator of the universe will stand trial before humanity, his blood will run for the forgiveness of sins, and this is how Jesus starts it? When he gets everybody together, he goes to a borrowed room in the middle of the city, when supper is done, he takes a towel, he gets on their feet, he washes them, and says, "Go and do likewise"? Can we just be honest? It seems a little anticlimactic compared to walking on water. It seems a little mundane compared to calming the storm. And yet maybe it's what he said that will cause us to think differently.

I want you to notice what happens in verse 6, it says, "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto

him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Notice what Jesus is saying, "Simon, you're not getting this. You're not going to grasp this." This is important because in John 2 after Jesus turns water into wine then he overturns the tables in the temple, they ask him the significance. Remember he said, "Tear down this building and in three days I will rebuild." And there in John 2 if you go back you can find it in parenthesis, it says they didn't get it until after his resurrection, then they understood what he was saying. What he's telling Peter is, "Peter, you're not going to quite get this now but you give it three days and you'll understand."

So what does Peter do? Peter does what we've done for thousands of years, he actually argued with God. Have you thought about that? I mean, think about the picture here. This is the what factor. What is Peter doing on behalf of the disciples? He is actually looking into the face of God and saying, "You don't know what you're doing. I know how to do it better." Now lest you throw stones at him, we've been doing this for a long time. Think back to the garden of Eden. I mean, there we were as humanity, everything's working out pretty well, right? I mean, we're walking with the Lord in the cool of the day. From all we can tell, Adam and Eve had not had to go to marriage counseling yet. Everybody is good and what happens? Humanity, though infiltrated by the serpent, decides, "You know, maybe the tree God told us not to eat of would be better than the one he said to. Why would God withhold information from us? Does he not want us to be wise like the gods?" So what did we do? We, humanity, decided that we knew how to do things better than God and what did it end up with? Outside the garden, thorns, pain, a whole lot of issues. We did the same thing at Babel. God said go different directions and we said, "Nah, I think we're better together." Abram did the same thing when the Lord said, "You're going to have a child out of season." He said, "Well, Sarah, no, way past the age. I think Hagar will do." Do you see the pattern with humanity? And what Jesus is doing here is not just doing an expose on Simon Peter, he's giving us a picture of all of us. How many of us would be willing to admit that oftentimes if not all the time, when God says what is best for us we say, "No, no, no, no. I think there's a better way. This isn't quite what I expected. This isn't quite what I wanted. This isn't what I scripted out."

So he argues. He says, "Well, I'll tell you what, if you decide you're going to wash my feet, then just go for it, everything." Now we were not there, we didn't have closed cameras there, we didn't have any type of recording equipment, but I do believe the Lord has a sense of humor, you don't believe so, just look at your life. He has a sense of humor and I think the Lord kind of smirked at him because what did he say? Interesting, verse 10, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." Let me tell you what Jesus is communicating, not just a picture of our propensity to argue and fight against what God would have for our lives but it's very prophetic. You see, a prophecy is something spoken in advance that those hearing it don't have the knowledge therein. What was Jesus saying? Do you think it's interesting that Jesus washed his feet? You know, over the next 24 hours we have the words of Peter when he denies the Lord but other than that we don't have the words of Bartholomew, of James, we don't have the words of all the disciples, but do you know what we do have? We have conclusive proof that their feet took them other places. Isn't it interesting that

Jesus washed after supper the one part of their body that would take them furthest from him.

Let me flip the script on us. When you and I are arguing with God, when you and I are not pleased with God, when we don't want to have anything to do with God, are we quick to run to God or run away from him? Are we quick to run to church or say, "I don't have time for that"? You see, what Jesus is showing us is not just our propensity to disagree with him but our propensity that when we do so, to find ourselves going away from him. You see, over the course of the next 24 hours, outside of Peter's denial on the patio, these guys are scarcely to be found. I mean, they've scattered. Interesting that what Jesus is communicating not just to Peter but to all of us is the human condition. We like to think we know what's best for our lives and when God confronts us about us being wrong, rather than running to him, we tend to run away and we grab those who are of like-mindedness.

You see, it's more than just a towel and water, there's this picture, there's this prophecy but critically today let's talk about the why, why is it that Jesus did what he did? Why is it that he said what he said? Why is it that this is the last act and words before everybody goes separate ways? First off, it's a picture. It's a picture that in spite of what has occurred and what is about to occur, that Jesus Christ, his love for humanity, his love for these guys, his love for us is of such a grave, unbelievable, amazing nature that he was and is willing to get into the areas of our life that smelled the worst and looked the worst.

Now for those of you who tend to like feet, God bless you is all I can say. But can we just agree that of the odorous elements in our lives, I think these are second to armpits, to be quite honest with you. If you don't believe me, I've got a whole house of old shoes from teenagers to prove you otherwise. Have any of you ever had this blessed experience, I'm sure you have at some level, maybe it's your child, your grandchild, whoever it may be, that you picked them up from ball practice just trying to help out and be nice, and because they are young and not always thinking correctly, they happen to leave their shoes in your car overnight. You laugh because you know what I'm talking about. It will make you want to trade in your car for a loss.

Feet are nasty. In fact, the fact that he would get down into the toes of these guys whether they had been properly washed hours earlier or not, do you see the picture? That area of our life, I'm just going to be honest, I'm going to speak to my own feet, you're never going to see them. I don't like feet and I don't like you seeing my feet. They're always well covered. But it's more than just feet. How often do the dark, nasty, stinky parts of your life, you want to hide them and what does Jesus say? "No, I want to address it. I want to get into that part of your life that nobody knows about. I want to get into that part of your life that you're embarrassed by. I want to get into that part of your life that you know is stinky and you really don't want others to see or to know about it." What a picture, that area that bothers us that we struggle with, that we lose sleep at night over, Jesus says, "No, no, no, I don't care how bad it is, I don't care how nasty it is, I don't care how embarrassed you are by it, I want to be a part of it."

What a picture and then there's a prophecy. Now work with me here, I want you to go back to verse 4, before he gets to actually washing the feet it says, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." Fast forward to verse 12, "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?" Now the obvious question is, "Yes, you've washed our feet though they probably need not being washed, we're kind of confused here." But I want you to look at the bigger picture. I want you to take back and step back just a moment in verse 4 when it says that he ungirded himself, took the towel up and he got down on the floor, it's a very prophetic picture not just of washing somebody's literal feet but everything Jesus Christ had come to do on humanity's behalf. According to Philippians 2, he allowed himself to have the garments and the riches of heaven pulled off of himself and he dwelt among us, he got into the dirt of humanity.

Notice it says he washed them with water. You talk about Ephesians 5, other passages talking about the washing of the water of the word of God. What did he say to the disciples every time they turned around? "Thus saith the Lord. This is what God said. This is what's best for your life. This is not good for your life." And then what happened? In a matter of 24 hours, he's going to allow his life to be taken, three days later he's going to raise from the grave. I want you to go back to verse 12, he took his garments and he sat down again. Do you know what Hebrews 1:3 says? It says Jesus by himself once he purged us from our sins, he went and he sat down at the right hand of the Father.

You say, "Why is that so significant?" Because here's what Jesus Christ is telling a group of men that are about to go running for the hills, "I've come, I've lived, I'm going to die, but I'm coming back because I am going to take my heavenly garments again and I'm going to sit down where I rightfully deserve again. The prophecy is that all that you're worried about, all you're concerned about, all that you're struggling with, you don't have to worry about it because I'm going to conquer death and I'm going to have the ability to absolve and to forgive you of all of your sin." It's not just a picture of his caring and his concern for our sinful nature, it's also a prophecy that he is going to overcome the grave, he is going to overcome death, he is going to come out on the other side.

But I want to close today with an unbelievable promise. Verse 15, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Now today I'll be very transparent, there's about 14 to 15 different ways that you could look at that verse. There are some people that believe that what we know is taking actual water and towels and washing each other's feet is exactly what Jesus is saying. There are others that say all this is very metaphorical as he was willing to get down in the dirt of our lives, we should get down in other's lives. And let me be honest with you, I don't know if we can really throw rocks at any of those because there's a whole lot going on here, but can I share with you the promise of this passage? Not only did he give us a picture of being willing to address the difficult, hidden, ashamed of parts of our life, not only does he give us a prophecy that though he has come down with us, he is going to rise back up and sit on the right hand of the Father, but verse 15 is an incredible promise, "I've given you an example. Go do

likewise." He knew they were about to deny him. He knew they were going to scatter. He knew that when he hung on that cross they wouldn't be around. He knew all those things and yet he said, "Do as I've told you."

What's the promise? This is incredible, don't miss it. He's saying, "In spite of where you've been and even in spite about what you're about to do, I'm going to give you a second chance. I'm going to give you a second chance." Is not that the one thing humanity longs for, a second chance? Think about it. Peter and James, John, all these guys have run for the hills, they've scattered themselves across Jerusalem, Jesus' body is buried in a borrowed tomb, and the last thing he told them was, "What I've done to you, do unto others." How could they fulfill this? How could they take care of this unless he gives them a second chance? You see, when we speak about the facts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, when we speak about the facts of his death and his resurrection, when we talk about the chronology and all of the events, at the end of the day for you and I what is so significant about these 24 hours, what is so important about his resurrection is that he is giving us a second chance.

Can I share with you what took place in Peter's life, the same one who argued with him? The same one that would deny him even saying, "I've never met that man before." Do you remember what happens when he hears that the tomb is empty? That old rough fisherman runs to the tomb. Why? Because Peter needed a second chance. We need a second chance. You need a second chance. I need a second chance. Some of you are thinking, "I need my third chance, my fourth chance." Some of you are saying, "I've run out of numbering them." When Jesus said to them, "Go and do likewise," he was saying, "Guys, I know what's about to happen. I'm going to fulfill my side of the equation. I know you're not going to fulfill yours but that's okay. I'm going to give you a second chance. Go and do likewise." The last 24 hours of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ are about a whole lot of events and people but we must begin by stating it's God's willingness to give us a second chance when we don't deserve it.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Maybe this morning you're that individual, maybe here gathered in person, maybe watching online, maybe even listening on the radio, maybe you're that person who said, "Man, I identify. I've been in the wrong places at the wrong time doing the wrong things with the wrong people." And maybe you'd even be willing to admit today that you've tried to fix it, you've tried to solve it, you've tried to somehow do something to address it, but maybe today is the day where you understand that the Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, whoever calls upon Jesus will be forgiven, will be delivered, will be set free, will be saved. Maybe today is the day that you recognize God has given you a second chance right now just to admit your sinful condition and call upon him to save you. If you're that person whether in person, online, just cry out to God. It doesn't have to be audible. It doesn't have to be out loud. It doesn't have to be words that I or somebody else might say in a certain format. This is your heart's cry before God and maybe it would go something like this. "God, today, Lord, I confess and I'm coming clean that I've been in places I shouldn't have been. I've done things I shouldn't have done. I've said things I shouldn't have said. God, I have thought things I shouldn't have thought and, God, I recognize that

I have a sin condition, I have rebelled against you. God, I also understand that there's nothing I can do to fix it. God, today I believe that Jesus Christ and him alone can forgive me and save me from my sin condition. God, today I believe, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was willing to come on my behalf. God, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to live a completely sinless life, rejecting all temptations and opportunity by this carnal world. He rejected them all on my behalf. And God, I believe that when he allowed himself to be placed on the cross and shed his blood, God, I believe he was paying the price for my sin. And God, today I believe that when he rose from the grave that he made it possible for my sins to be forgiven, he made it feasible for my soul to be saved. God, today I don't quite get it but I believe it, I understand that my sin can be forgiven and absolved by Jesus Christ alone. So in the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you're that person today and we would love the privilege in just a moment after I pray and we stand and sing just to celebrate with you, just to hear your story, just to pray with you and pray for you. So in a moment as I pray and as we stand and sing, we invite you just step out and step forward. We'd love the privilege. Or maybe today you say, "I've already taken care of that. I've been saved a long time." Maybe today is that day there's another decision to be rendered, maybe the Lord has impressed upon you about being a part of this incredible body of believers, or maybe it's not about stepping out and stepping forward, maybe it's about stepping out of here in just a few moments realizing that God gives you a second chance, and maybe there is something that's been bothering you, maybe you've been struggling with something, maybe you've been dealing with something and maybe today is the day where you lay that issue in that basin of your feet and allow Jesus just to take care of it.

Lord Jesus, as we come to this time of decision, thank you, God, thank you that no matter where we've been, what we've done, thank you that it is not beyond your scope of forgiveness, it's not beyond your scope of grace and mercy. God, today help us to only listen to your voice and no other. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.