
Sermon Notes

May 31, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Heart of Jesus: The Servant's Heart

John 13:1-12

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² During supper, when the devil had already put it 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 had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ 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.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ 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." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

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?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ 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.

Memories

- ❖ Embarrassment, grief, and tension have a peculiar way of embedding things in our memory
 - the memory of the final few hours Jesus spends with His disciples in the Upper Room is seared into John's heart and mind because of the embarrassment, grief and tension that were all in play during those final 4-5 hours with Jesus
 - John shows us Jesus' soul
- ❖ In John 13-17 we are invited to plunge right into the heart of Jesus
 - what we learn about Jesus, what we learn from Jesus in these chapters has extraordinary implication for how we think about and approach the Christian life
 - these chapters call us to evaluate whether or not it is our heart's desire to know Christ and to make Him known
 - these final words of Jesus encourage and equip us for service and sanctification in the midst of the crooked and twisted generation to which God calls us to shine like the stars in the sky

A Bad Beginning

- ❖ We know from Luke's account that this night doesn't get off to a very spectacular start (Luke 22:24-26)
 - which of them is the greatest?

- John also tells us the *devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray* Jesus
- ❖ With all that going on, and with all that is about to go on, Jesus calmly, majestically, serenely washes His disciples' feet
 - v. 3, knowing that the Father is in control and knowing the Father's plan allows Jesus to occupy Himself with the needs of others
 - though He will be crucified in less than 24 hours, Jesus totally immerses Himself in personal ministry to these 12 men
- ❖ Peter's protest (vv. 6 & 8)
 - Jesus points to the symbolic meaning of what He is doing (vv. 7-8, 10)
 - even as He indicates the presence of a traitor among them, Jesus goes right on showing compassion and modeling a servant's heart

Here's the Question

- ❖ v. 12 "*Do you understand what I have done to you?*"
 - Jesus provides a model for **ALL** of us to follow
 - His example is one of personal, self-sacrifice and unending love (*cf.* v. 1)
- ❖ Only absolute humility can generate absolute love
 - displaying this sort of authentic love to the world was, is and always will be counter cultural

- Jesus calls us to practical humility in the midst of normal, everyday living

The Servant's Heart

- ❖ In the foot washing of John 13, Jesus provides a practical demonstration of what Paul describes theologically in Philippians 2:5-11
- ❖ Jesus does not count equality with God something to be grasped, and He empties (or pours) Himself into human form and servant ministry
 - in His undiminished deity, Jesus bows and bends to wash the feet of proud human beings
 - washing His disciples' feet offers a picture of what salvation in Him looks like (inner cleansing)
- ❖ Jesus putting His robe back on and returning to His place at the table is a small scale picture of the way Christ returned to His rightful place in heaven and how He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father

Personal Application

1. Is following and fulfilling Jesus' example something that characterizes your life?
2. How is God calling you to demonstrate authentic love and practical humility in the relationships with which He has entrusted you?
3. Are you more preoccupied with being listened to, exerting your rights, and/or being respected than you are in emptying yourself and serving others? What will you do to begin to change that?