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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**August 2, 2015**

**Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet**

**John 13:1-7**

**Prayer:** *Father, we just want to thank you once again for this time, we thank you for what this day represents. This is the Sunday set aside to recognize you and the cross that you were willing to bear for us. Father, we just again thank you for the gift of your Son. We pray this morning as we again open up your book and look into it with a particular emphasis on what your Son has done for us, that you would give us the presence of your Holy Spirit, guide us, direct us, give us the ability to use your word to make us grow, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, like I said, this is again, the first Sunday of the month and this is the Sunday that we remember Jesus Christ and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died had a Passover supper with his disciples, the final Passover supper, and Matthew 26 describes what took place. It says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it,*

*all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."* Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood, and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat the remembrance of this celebration on a regular basis, and this is what we call the Lord's table. Now, we celebrate it once a month, and we do that by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, by confessing our sins, and then by participating in the elements. *John 6:53* says: *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Now we've been following the life of Jesus and we have worked our way up so far to the 13th chapter of the gospel of John. *John 13* says this: *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. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing*

*that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God who was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around 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.*

There is so much going on in this paragraph that we really need to unpack, and scripture is actually very much like that, sometimes it only gives you the bare bones of the story and you need to kind of sketch in the details. The opening verse here describes a meal that Jesus is having, and he's having it with his disciples, and first of all it describes what's going on inside the mind of Jesus. It says: *When Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father.* You see, only Jesus and his father knew that within 24 hours or so, Jesus would be hanging on a cross. And imagine if you will the pressure of knowing that the unthinkable is about to unfold before you and you know it all too well, and you're surrounded by people who don't have a clue. In fact sometimes they're far worse than clueless. Jesus knows all things. In fact, he knows all about the fight that the disciples had just engaged in over who were going to be big shots in his coming kingdom. *Luke 22* describes what had taken place just beforehand. It says: *A dispute also 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, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as one who serves." Now some commentators think that that dispute arose right then and there as to who was going to be sitting and in what order around the table. And we also know for a fact that this wasn't the first time that Jesus had this very issue to discuss with his disciples. Weeks before we have another incident recorded in Mark's gospel that's very, very similar. Mark 9 says this, it says: *They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."*

See, the disciples are suddenly silent because they knew that Jesus was not going to be pleased with their conversation and they think somehow their silence is going to prevent Jesus from knowing what he already knows. I mean, in our text this morning we see the same behavior repeated. Jesus is about to die. He's about to die and he's meeting for the very last time with the twelve that he poured his life into for these last three years, and they're not only oblivious about his deep suffering, they're fighting among themselves about who's going to be the big shot. To make matters worse, Jesus knows full well that Judas, who is reclining at the very same table with all of the other disciples, he knows that Judas has already made up his mind to betray him. Verse 2 says: *The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.* Once again you got to put that into Jesus's mindset. For three years now Jesus has poured himself into the disciples as a group and individually he's poured himself into Judas as a person. And these last few encounters that take place between Jesus and Judas are really Jesus's last few attempts to give Judas one more opportunity to turn back. It's an opportunity that he will never accept. But Jesus' response, it's nothing less than astounding.

The text this morning says: *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.* I want to speak about the

practical way that Jesus loved his disciples until the end, until -- in order to do that, once again I'm going to try out another fifty cent word. And I want to trot this word out not because I want to impress you with words but because this word says exactly what Jesus was dealing with. It describes the attitude of his disciples perfectly. The word is "recalcitrant." Have you ever heard that? That's about seventy-five cent word, that's not even fifty. It's an adjective and it means this, it means: Resisting authority or control; not obedient or compliant; hard to deal with, manage or operate. The disciples were a stunningly recalcitrant bunch, but they were really no different than their ancestors, the Jews, who were in the desert. Let me give you some examples of this recalcitrant.

You remember when the Jews were about to go through the Red Sea on dry land, they had already had revealed to them not one but ten specific miracles that God had done in the form of ten plagues that afflicted Egypt. And time and time again, God sends these plagues, and these plagues are very geographically specific, that is, they strike the Egyptians while leaving the Jews completely untouched. Let me give you one example. God sends flies and says this in *Exodus 8:20*: "*But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.*"

*Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen." And the Lord did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies. Now just imagine if you will as a Jew, you're seeing these enormous cloud-like swarms of flies all over the entire country and there's this one doughnut hole, this one empty pocket that sits right over where the Jews are. That's what they saw and that was a miracle. God also killed the Egyptian's cattle in the very same way. This is what he says in Exodus 9:1-7, he says: And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go. Same happened with hail. Exodus 9:25, it says: The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail. So on and on these plagues come and it's obvious even to the Egyptians that God was sending it to punish them and to free the Jews. Even the Egyptians said of Moses after the locusts came in Exodus 10:7, he said: "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they*

*may serve the LORD their God. Do you not understand that Egypt is ruined?"*

Before the very worst plague, that is the angel of death destroying all of the firstborn, Moses again makes this huge distinction between Jew and Egyptian. *Exodus 11:5*, it says: *"And every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all of the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel."* And again, we all know what happened, I mean, the angel of death swoops into Egypt, killing every single firstborn whose house is not protected by the blood of an innocent lamb. And so Pharaoh finally relents and lets the people go, and then he has a change of heart, he decides he's going to go back and recapture or kill them. Well now you would think that a people who had witnessed this spectacular set of miracles would be at least willing to see what God would do about Pharaoh's last ditch attempt to recapture a people he has reluctantly let go. *Exodus 14* says: *When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared*



greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. Now considering their history, considering the spectacular miracles that God has just done in their midst, you might think perhaps they're going to cry out for mercy. Perhaps they're going to cry out for God's intervention, maybe just specifically for his help, but that's not what they cried. Like I said, they were a recalcitrant bunch. They instantly threw Moses under the bus and then shortly afterwards God himself. In verse 11 it says: *They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?"* And here's where the revisionist history starts to fly. Instead of trusting in the God who had done these ten specific miracles, they start reflecting on how life was wonderful in Egypt. They said to Moses in verse 12: *Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: "Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?"* Well, as a matter of fact, that's not what they said. I think if I was Moses, I would ask to see, can I see these people who actually said that, the people who actually claimed that they never, never really wanted to be freed of this incredibly awful slavery that they were under? But you see, it turns out that the Jews weren't really in favor of serving the Egyptians, they were just convinced that God was going to kill them by the Egyptians. They said: *"For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."* Now remember

these words. These are not words that are spoken in a vacuum. These are folks who have just witnessed these ten specific miracles setting themselves apart from the Egyptians. These miracles apparently meant nothing. If I was Moses I certainly would not have had the grace to say what he said. And he said this in *Exodus 14*. It says: *And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."* We all know what happened next, I mean, the Red Sea parts, the Jews go through on dry land and then God closes it over the head of the Egyptians as they're pursuing them, drowning them all. So God saves them in spite of this incredibly miserable attitude.

And I wish I could say this was an isolated incident but it wasn't. There are many, many more times where the Jews in the desert acted as badly or worse, and each time when things got bad, their default position was to throw God and/or Moses under the bus. You know, God feeds them miraculously for forty years in the desert and their response is what? Well, they start complaining about the food. You know, God and Moses had some nerve to take them away from what they described as an Egypt that resembled something closer to Disney land. Listen to what their description of it was. This is

from Numbers 11. It says: *Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but is this manna to look at."* This is what recalcitrance looks like. Here's your example. Later on the scripture gives a description of what happened when they ran out of water. This is Numbers 20. It says: *Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."* This incidentally is the place where Moses struck the rock and it gushed out. And again, we see God's response to their bitter complaining as this spectacular miracle. But this is what God said about the water itself that flowed out of the rock. He said this in Numbers 20, it says: *These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.* You see Meribah actually means: To argue with God. And argue they

did. You know, one of the definitions of the word "recalcitrant" is hard to deal with, manage or operate. These folks were the definition of recalcitrant.

But this brings us to our disciples, because they too were recalcitrant. See, Moses is facing an Egyptian Army knowing that God is all faithful and all powerful and that he's going to fight their fights for them. So he's able to look past his own people's recalcitrance to the God who had, in spite of their stubborn resistance, chosen for some reason to love them. Well, Jesus was facing a far more formidable foe. Jesus was facing death itself and the accumulated wrath of God for the sins of mankind, past, present, and to come. There would be no rescue from God as Jesus knew that he was about to bear the wrath of God. So you would hope at this moment perhaps Jesus could look around and find some shred of comfort from the men that he had poured his life into for the past three years. And what are they doing? They're fighting among themselves. They're jockeying for position. And one of them has already decided he's going to betray him. So what does Jesus do? Well, he does just what his Father did. Again: *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.* Here's how Jesus loved them, says: *Jesus, knowing the Father had given all things into his hands, 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, tied it around 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.*

Once again, scripture gives us just the bare bones, just the facts, ma'am, that's all you get. These words also need to be unpacked, and once again, our culture tends to bleed what Jesus did of its meaning. What Jesus did has now become sort of a formalized symbolic act that's typically done around Easter time. It's a wonderful thing and I'm not knocking what it is, it's a wonderful thing to remember what Jesus did that way, but for thousands of years we've seen this as part of what the church does at Easter time. It's Easter time, so here's the foot washing ceremony. That repetition tends to put us outside of the actual event itself. But here's what actually happened. See, Jesus didn't just take off his garment singular, he took off his garments plural. He literally stripped to his underwear. Now in that culture, that was a profoundly demeaning thing to do. I mean, even in our culture the idea of being stripped to your underwear is the thing of which nightmares are made. But Jesus voluntarily put himself in the position of the lowest of the low. And he did it at a time when there was no precedent whatsoever for this, this wasn't oh, it's time for the foot washing ceremony. This is Jesus getting up from the table and doing it at the very first. Understand, this is the

King of the universe, this is the Creator and the sustainer of all life, of everything that exists, the one to whom all worship is due, and he's dining for the very last time with this recalcitrant bunch and instead of lashing out at their absolutely thoughtless ambition, once again he humbles himself to teach.

As the elders begin to distribute the bread, I would like us to consider what an incredible Savior we have. *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* As the elements are being distributed, I would also consider this warning that God gives about communion itself, it's the warning I give each time we undertake this. It's from *1 Corinthians 11*. God says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* You know, I repeat this every time, I repeat the warning, I say communion is extremely serious business and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to court disaster. If you are not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King or if you feel the need to be reconciled with your brother or sister before you bring your sacrifice before the altar, then when

those elements come in front of you, just pass them along. Don't feel the need for some kind of social pressure to take them. I also point out that on the other side of this equation we can make the other mistake. That's the mistake of thinking that unless we're spotlessly perfect we are unworthy to receive communion, and that too is a mistake. You see, being a child of the King doesn't mean that we will never sin and that we will never fall. It means that we recognize that the salvation that we have been given is a gift, it's a gift of the Holy Spirit and no one is ever capable of earning that gift simply by being good. To repeat what Dane Ortlund says, he says: "In the kingdom of God the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." It also means that when we do fail, we are aware that we have sinned, and why? Because we have God's Holy Spirit that now lives inside us and it's his spirit that convicts us of sin. And so we sin and as we sin, we grieve because we know that we have a Father in heaven who longs to forgive and cleanse us who says in *John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So we understand that being a child of the King doesn't mean that we are without sin, it means that we understand that when we do sin, we know we have an advocate with the Father, we have someone who is speaking out in heaven right now on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to*

*you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the righteous one. And so because we have, we own, we possess Jesus's righteousness and not our own, we are now free to eat from his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus has purchased for you at the price of his own blood. He lived the life we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven. Consider what a wonderful Savior we have.*

*1 Corinthians the 11th chapter, 23rd verse says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Take, and eat.*

As the elders begin to distribute the cup, I'd like to focus in on just what Jesus did with his disciples on the day before he died. Now we said the disciples, just like their forefathers, were a recalcitrant group who constantly fell back to their own sinful habits and patterns. That's just who they were, but we're no different from them. We all do the very same thing. We all fall back into our old sinful patterns and behaviors. There's a grand difference between Jesus and us, and the grand difference is this:



The deeper you look into Jesus, the more you will see light and truth and loveliness. The deeper you look into us, the more you will see darkness, you will see lies, and you will see ugliness. I'm not saying that to diminish us. I'm saying that to illuminate Him. You see, what stood out most about Jesus on this very last day was the statement the scripture makes about him. It says: *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.* You know, Jesus knew himself and he knew us. He knew that he was transcendentally flawless, so perfect he could demand of his accusers in *John 8: "Which of you accuses me of sin?"* But he also knew about himself that the deeper that you looked into him, the more you would find flawless, truth, and beauty. But he also knew how we operate. He knew that we always put our best foot forward and that we always wear our beauty as much as we can on the outside and try as much as we can to hide our ugliness on the inside. And we see Jesus probing and probing at that ugliness time and again as he's ministering to his disciples. Again *Mark 9:34*, it says: *And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.* Now the disciples kept silent because they didn't want Jesus to see that ugliness. But this is the beauty of Jesus. That ugliness was never, never hidden from him. I mean he saw it again and again and again from the ancient people who were protesting

Moses to the disciples vying for power. Jesus saw the ugliness of our fallenness and our sin and yet still *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end*. Think about what that means to you and me. I mean I can think of three things. Number one, God loves us faithfully. It means that God has seen every single ugly thing about you and me that there is to see. He saw it yesterday, he sees it today, and he will see every single tomorrow that you and I will ever have. There is nothing hidden from his sight, and yet still he has chosen to fix his love on you and me. That's why Tim Keller says: "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

Again, *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end*. See, that also means that God loves us repeatedly. I mean, how many times did the Jews in the desert disappoint God? How many times did the disciples disappoint Jesus? You know, part of the faithfulness that we see in Jesus is his willingness to go back again and again and again to reiterate, restate and re illustrate what he was trying to teach them about life in the kingdom. He repeatedly gave of himself this way. You know the dinner that Jesus is washing the feet of his disciples at is yet another case in point. In spite of the disciples' recalcitrance,

Jesus is determined to teach them. How many times did Jesus catch his disciples thinking or acting in ways that were exactly the opposite of what he had been teaching them for three full years? And how could it be on the day before his death, Jesus is back at it, teaching, reiterating, restating and re illustrating just what it means to be a servant. Well, this has something to say to us today. You see, we need to hear the truth of God repeated over and over and over again. That's one of the reasons why we as a church exist. You know, I know of people who are Christians who don't ever go to church, but I can't say that I know of any successful Christians who never go to church. And one of the reasons why church is so necessary is that just like the disciples, we all need to hear the truths of the gospels recast, restated and reiterated over and over again because, like the Jews and like the disciples, we are a recalcitrant bunch. We will constantly fall back into our old patterns. God made that clear in *Proverbs 29:18*, he said: *Where there is no vision, the people perish.* You see, take away that repeated exposure to truth, and the lies that this culture is gulping down wholesale are going to become your lies as well. The NIV translates *Proverbs 29* as saying: *Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.* You know, if you want to see this verse really come alive, just turn on the news.

Let me give you one example. Everyone this week is talking about Cecil the lion. I'm sure more of you have heard about it. This dentist in the United States who went to Zimbabwe and shot a lion that turned out to be a local favorite. He thought he was doing it legally, perhaps he was doing it illegally, but the net effect is that people all around the world and particularly here in the United States are consumed with outrage at this dentist. In fact he's had to go into hiding. And simultaneously in the very same week we learned that Planned Parenthood from a variety of undercover videos has been selling baby parts harvested from abortions. There's been a series of undercover videos that show just how depraved these Planned Parenthood doctors are as they're actually discussing on camera how they can get livers and lungs and other body parts by crunching above and below them as they abort the child, ensuring that the parts will be delivered fresh and certainly undamaged. They're guaranteeing a good harvest of parts. So we have this circumstance, the death of Cecil the lion provokes outrage, the death of thousands and thousands of babies literally taken apart provokes a ho-hum. There's a reason why people react this way. You see, *Romans 2* tells us that God's law is written into the hearts of everyone, Christian and non-Christian alike, and that every one of us is given a sense of what is morally outrageous, but as a culture we are so deeply invested in this sin of abortion that we need to find some other venue, some other means

to express our moral outrage, and what better than a killing of a lion in Zimbabwe. *Lifesite News* said this about the incident: "The three broadcast networks, ABC, NBC and CBS censored the third video released Tuesday by the Center for Medical Progress exposing Planned Parenthood's practice of harvesting aborted baby parts -- censored it at Planned Parenthood's urging. But the news shows did find more than 14 minutes for a far more important story: the 'outrage' over the shooting of Cecil, a famed African lion. Tuesday the network spent 5 minutes, 44 seconds during their evening news shows on Cecil -- and that's not even counting the teasers. Wednesday morning, ABC, NBC and CBS lamented over the lion for 8 minutes, 17 seconds. But they couldn't do the same for a story of babies 'picked' apart by tweezers."

Again, speaking of the death of Cecil, the *New American* said this, it said: "Perhaps the mainstream media can explain it. As *Lifeside* also reported, *Good Morning America* co-anchor Lara Spencer closed her July 29 segment about the lion with 'There are no words' (except, apparently, enough for oodles of coverage). Co-anchor Gayle King of CBS' *This Morning* lamented, 'The more you hear about it, the more upsetting it is.' Host of CBS *Evening News* Scott Pelley analogized, 'It's as if someone had killed Lassie.' Jimmy Kimmel actually got choked up and teary on his July 28 program, as he devoted 4 minutes, 42 seconds to Cecil. And British journalist

Piers Morgan did one better, actually issuing a (tongue-in-cheek) death threat, saying that he and his accomplices should track down Dr. Palmer, 'skin him alive, cut his head from his neck, and take a bunch of photos of us grinning inanely at his quivering flesh,' related *Lifesite*. Interestingly, this scenario roughly approximates what Planned Parenthood regularly does to babies."

Do you want another definition of the word recalcitrant? It's us. We are the ones. I mean, we're all part of this culture of death. If I was God, I would want to write all of us off completely, and yet for some reason God still loves us. God loves us faithfully, God loves us repeatedly and finally *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end*, means God loves us practically. You know, it's not for nothing that the very final lesson that Jesus taught his disciples on the day before he died was not some abstract theological construct or some propositional understanding of sanctification or justification. It was a practical demonstration. It was a demonstration of what it means to serve. Jesus stunned his disciples not by saying but by doing, and that too speaks to us. You know, communion is a time of self-reflection. It is the perfect time to ask myself how I have heard and heeded Jesus' last great teaching. Jesus taught that love is service, and he taught service by humbling himself to the lowest level of service there was, the washing of feet. Communion

is a time to ask myself how service defines my walk with Jesus. Am I all talk and mere belief? Or do I understand that Christ has called all of us to serve? You know, if someone were to say to you as a Christian, I know you speak about living life as a new creature in Christ and that your heart has been transformed and you have the presence of the Holy Spirit living within you and those are wonderful words, but how do they translate into your life as a Christian? What have you done to back up those words with deeds? Could any of us point to anything in particular if somebody said what have you done to distinguish yourself for Christ? Understand, deeds will never, ever save us, but our deeds is what God uses to judge to see if our hearts really have been radically changed. And God knows better than any of us that talk is cheap. *Romans 2:6* says God *will repay each person according to what they have done*. So I want to spend a few moments this morning just asking ourselves that very question. What have I done for Christ and kingdom?

*1 Corinthians the 11th chapter, 25th verse says: In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."* Take, and drink.

This is the part of the service that I call heads, heart and feet. It's where we speak about some practical application of what it

means to remember Jesus Christ. And I know Andy mentioned this morning before that I'm a board member of the Tri-State's Crisis Pregnancy Center. I went there a couple of years ago because I was feeling the pressure that I was speaking a lot and not doing very much. And so when I first went there, they let me put cribs together and change light bulbs and do stuff like that, and that's -- whatever was necessary around there, and then I got to kind of counsel with some of the men and eventually worked my way into being on the board. And in light in particular of what Planned Parenthood is up to these days, I need to say that maybe you should consider Tri-States as well. It is an incredible venue for service. And I want to point out one thing in particular, they are -- there's a banquet coming up in the fall, and let me tell you, Tri-States is hurting for money, and one of the ways they make money is they go to businesses and they ask these businesses to take out an ad in their book. This is last year's booklet. So they're looking for volunteers to just go to local businesses in Port Jervis and just say, hey, would you like to take an ad out in their -- in the Tri-State's booklet. That's one thing that you could do. You could just go as a volunteer, they need people to watch the switchboards, they need people to work the volunteer aspect of -- there's all kinds of things that need to be done. And if you're feeling the pressure, and I hope you are, the Holy Spirit is saying we need to be at the business of service as well.



Tuesday night is National Night Out as Tom Brozycki said. There's going to be all kinds of people who are service people in Port Jervis that are kind of touting what services they offer. We offer the King of kings. We offer eternal life. We're going to have a booth set up there and Tom's looking for more volunteers, Tom's looking for people who would just make his problem saying, okay, we have too many. We're looking for service, for that opportunity to serve. You know, my brother-in-law goes to Capitol Hill Baptist in Washington D.C. and they have about a thousand people in the congregation and at the end of the service, the pastor stands up there and says, "I need eight volunteers for this" and like 30 people raise their hand. Okay, you, done. He'll go down just through a list of things and people are jumping up, and they're saying here am I, send me. This is a great church. Let me get that straight, this is a great church for jumping in and helping, but even we could do better. Every one of us needs to have that notion in our mind that here am I, send me.

Last week I spoke -- or two weeks ago I spoke about the persecution that I think is coming, and I think it's coming a lot faster than you recognize. And I said one of the ways to prepare for persecution is to start with little things. The principle that Jesus speaks about all the time is that if you do little things faithfully, when big things come you will be faithful in those as

well. And one of the things that I talked about is I said maybe it's your neighbor that uses Jesus's name as a dishrag or maybe it's somebody who's a friend of yours who uses the resources of Facebook to trash the gospel. Well again, this is about doing, this is about jumping from thinking about something to doing it. And afterwards I got a phone call from Emily who has just that, she has a dear friend who routinely trashes Christianity on Facebook and it's a very scary thing to say I need to launch out, I need to just engage her and just try to figure out how I'm going to do that. And she recognizes, I might lose a friend and I might gain a whole bunch of enemies by engaging her in a loving way and just challenging some of the thoughts that this gal has. But that's what we have to do, we have to launch, we can't just think about it, we have to do it and we're here as resources for you. You want to jump out and do any of these kind of things, that's what we're here for. But the point I want you to get is you think back to what Jesus is doing. He's about to die the very next day, and what he's showing his disciples is you love by serving. So ask God today, what can I do to serve? And intentionally seek out that venue, whatever it is that God gives you. Let's pray.

*Father, I just want to pray for your church, I pray for the interesting times that we are in, I -- I am just jazzed about this time, I just think this is an exciting time to be alive, an*

*exciting time to be a Christian, it's a time when being a Christian is actually going to start meaning something. I appreciate the fact that things are going to get difficult. But Lord, things have always been difficult for your saints. We've just had a 200-year coast where we coasted along on the wonderful goodness of the Bible-based teaching that this country was founded on. That's gone. That's no more. And Lord, I want to be prepared, I want to be prepared to speak the truth in love, and I want to be prepared to serve, and I want to pray that your Holy Spirit would speak to us, speak to me, speak to each of us individually about how we can go about that business. I pray for strength, I pray for wisdom, I pray for courage. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*