



October 9, 2022
"Serve Like Jesus"

[John 13:1-17](#)

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In today's study from John 13, Pastor Gary teaches about the time when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. It was a pure gesture of love and humility. The God of the Universe stooped down to wash the dirty feet of sinners! And then He tells us to "follow His example." How are we to serve others in humility, especially those who have betrayed or mistreated us?

1. [John 13:1-17](#) - *"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having 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 and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are You washing my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.' Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.' Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, 'You are not all clean.' So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your 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 should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.'"*

- a. Chapters 1-12 of the Gospel of John cover three full years of Jesus' ministry, but chapters 13-19 only cover approximately twenty-four to thirty-six hours in the days before Jesus' crucifixion
- b. Chapters 13-17 are known as the "Upper Room Discourse" and are the final words of Jesus in a private setting with His disciples as they partook in the Passover meal
- c. Although Jesus was speaking in the moment to the twelve disciples, the words in this passage have direct application for all followers of Jesus
- d. When Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded this scene, they focused on the Lord's Supper, or Communion, as we know it today—John instead focused on Jesus washing the disciples' feet
 - i. The benefit of the four different Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is that each provides us with a unique perspective from the vantage point of the author, therefore providing a fuller, more comprehensive picture of Jesus' life

2. Serve one another in humility

- a. **John 13:14-15** – *"If I then, your 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 should do as I have done to you."*
 - i. Some denominations and sects believe that Jesus was establishing foot washing as an ordinance like baptism or Communion
 - ii. There are no New Testament references of the early church practicing foot washing as a part of ceremonial ordinances
 - iii. Rather than establishing an ordinance, Jesus was setting an example as a humble servant of others
 - iv. In biblical times, girding a towel and washing feet was done by indentured servants or Gentile slaves—Jesus was taking the posture of a servant

3. Serving others is never beneath you

- a. God in flesh stooped down to serve sinners
- b. The Creator served the created

4. Serving others is never about who they are; it is about who Christ is and how He wants us to follow His example

- a. Jesus knew about Judas' intent to betray Him, and later in the same chapter Jesus exposed Judas for what he planned to do and yet He still washed Judas' feet
- b. It was not about Judas—Jesus was doing what God told Him to do and set an example of humility
- c. Serving those who hurt you frees you from bitterness, resentment, and anger

5. Humility is seen in not only how we serve others but in how we allow others to serve us
 - a. Peter struggled with letting Jesus wash his feet
 - i. He felt unworthy
 - b. Feelings of unworthiness and vulnerability can make us think that if we are being served, we must not be able to take care of ourselves
 - i. This is pride
 - c. Sometimes we need to receive kindness—we rob others of their blessings in serving us when we refuse to be served

6. There is always a blessing in serving
 - a. **John 13:17** - *“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*
 - b. Serving takes time, sacrifice, and humility

7. Serve like Jesus
 - a. **Galatians 5:13-14** - *“...serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”* (1984 NIV)
 - b. **1 Peter 4:10** - *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”* (1984 NIV)
 - c. **Matthew 20:25-28** - *“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”*
 - d. Jesus became the ultimate example of a servant when He went to the cross to die for our sins that we might be forgiven

Discussion Questions

1. Read **John 13:1-17** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Why did Jesus wash the disciples’ feet? (See #2a-ii and #2a-iv above)
3. Have you ever struggled with feeling like serving in a specific way is “beneath you?” Why should we reject those feelings? (See #3 above)
4. What does serving others exemplify? (See #4 above)
5. Jesus was fully aware of Judas’ intent to betray Him, and yet He still washed Judas’ feet. What implication does this have for our lives? (See #4b and #4c above)

6. Why do we sometimes resist allowing others to serve us? (See #5b above)
7. Discuss a time when you resisted allowing someone to serve you. How might the situation have looked if you had allowed the person to serve you?
8. Read [John 13:17](#). What does Scripture assure us of receiving when we serve? How have you experienced this in your own life? (See #6 above)
9. Read [Galatians 5:13-14](#), [1 Peter 4:10](#), and [Matthew 20:25-28](#). What are simple ways that you can love and serve like Jesus? (See #7 above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)