

## **Humble Servant**

The title of the sermon is humble servant. Good morning church! It's great to see you guys again. It's awesome to be here with y'all this morning. Psalm 118:24! If you would turn your Bibles to John 13. This morning I want to talk about one of the many important moments in the last supper and how Jesus humbled Himself to washed the disciples feet and took the place of a servant. We'll unpack what it truly takes to be a servant. Before we open the Word let's pray together.

Starting with me in verse 1, it says...

<sup>1</sup>It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup>The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup>Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup>so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup>After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

<sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup>Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

<sup>8</sup>"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

<sup>9</sup> “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. <sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

My first point this morning is: **Being a servant takes humility: Verses 1-5**

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Sunday, and on Monday had cleansed the temple. Tuesday was a day of conflict as the religious leaders sought to trip Him up and get evidence to arrest Him. These events are recorded in Matthew 21–25. Wednesday was probably a day of rest, but on Thursday He met in the Upper Room with His disciples in order to observe Passover. Jesus knew that “His hour was come.” John’s writing emphasizes the fact that Jesus lived on what we can call a “heavenly timetable” as He did the Father’s will. Note the development of His time had come: 2:4—“Mine hour is not yet come.” 7:30—“His hour was not yet come.” 8:20—“His hour was not yet come.” 12:23—“The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” 13:1—“Jesus knew that His hour was come.” 17:1—“Father, the hour is come. This

hour that was to come and he was entering into in this moment was that He would go on to be glorified by His death and resurrection for you and I. We look at it at His time to be brought to the cross to die, but also for Him it was to show his love and glory by going to the cross for our sins. Jesus would go on to be with the Father later on, but He did not leave until His work on earth was complete. And even in His mind that the hour was coming, He didn't think of Himself. He still cared to put the disciples and others before Him. Jesus being a servant had cared and thought of others before Himself by getting on His knees and washing their feet. Jesus showed humility. Humility is a modest or low view of one's own importance or being humble.

In 1878 when the Salvation Army was beginning to make its mark, men and women from all over the world began to enlist. One man, who had once dreamed of becoming a bishop, crossed the Atlantic from America to England to enlist. Samuel Brengle left a fine pastorate to join the SA. But at first General Booth accepted his services reluctantly and grudgingly. Booth said to Brengle, "you've been your own boss too long." And in order to instill humility in Brengle, he set him to work cleaning the boots of other trainees. Discouraged, Brengle said to himself, "have I followed my own fancy across the Atlantic in order to black boots?" and then as in a vision, he saw Jesus bending over the feet of rough fishermen. "Lord," he whispered, "you washed their feet; I will black their shoes." Sometimes we need to take a step back, humble ourselves, and remember that even our Lord and Savior showed humility.

Jesus also knew that Judas was the one to betray and turn Him in. The word translated "put" in John 13:2 literally means "to throw." It reminds us of the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:16). Judas was an unbeliever, so he did not have a "shield of faith" to use to ward off Satan's attacks. None of us deserve to have our feet washed by Jesus, but He still did anyways

for the disciples to make them clean. And with this story in verse 2, He even washed the feet of the one who He knew would betray Him. An old proverb says, “Actions speak louder than words,” and the Lord’s willingness to wash the feet of his disciples, even Judas’s, reflects servant leadership at its best.

Even in His humiliation, our Lord had all things through His Father. He was poor and yet He was rich. Because Jesus knew who He was, where He came from, what He had, what He had been given, and where He was going, He was the complete master of the situation. Jesus always looked to the Father and kingdom for guidance and to live in the Father’s will. [Matthew 6:33](#) says, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” God’s going to always provide not what we want, but what we need. In that we don’t have to stress but live in confidence that He will give us all things for His glory. God had given Him everything in His hands, and what did Jesus do? He picked up a towel. It was a menial task, and yet Jesus did it! As a special mark of affection, a host or hostess might wash a guest’s feet, but it was not standard operating procedure in most homes. This was a role for a servant or a slave to do. You and I as believers know that we have been born of God, that we have been born again through the blood of Jesus, that we are one day going to God, and that in Christ we have all things; therefore, we should be able to follow our Lord’s example and serve others.

Flipping over to [Luke 22](#), Jesus and his disciples are at the last supper. After they eat, Jesus mentions that one of them was going to betray Jesus and they all were trying to figure out who was planning to do such a thing. Then they had this conversation starting in verse 24.

<sup>24</sup> A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”

At such a meaningful time as this, the disciples really just asked who is the greatest among them. If I were Jesus and I was about to go to the cross and I heard these knuckleheads talking about whose the greatest, I would have turned the towel in, not wrapped myself in one and washed their feet. A servant does not argue over who is the greatest, because he knows that he is the least, he must be humble, and gladly accept this honor from God. Jesus gave his disciples a humbling lesson here by washing their feet.

*Form* is outward expression of the inward nature. Jesus did not pretend to be a servant. He was not an actor playing a role. That’s what He was. It takes love and grace to serve others. Being a true servant takes humility.

**Next point: A servant must be truly cleansed and have their feet washed: Verses 6-11**

<sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

<sup>8</sup> “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

<sup>9</sup> “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

The word translated “wash” in verses 5, 6, 8, 12, and 14 is *nipto* and means “to wash a part of the body.” But the word translated “washed” in John 13:10 is *louo* and means “to bathe all over.” The distinction is important, for Jesus was trying to teach His disciples the importance of a holy walk or living this new and cleansed life in Christ. When we confess our sins, put our faith and trust in Jesus, He washes away all of our sins and forgives us.

Titus 3:3-7 says, “3 For we also were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, enslaved to various desires and pleasures, spending our lives in wickedness and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not by deeds of righteousness that we have done, but because of his mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The importance of having our feet cleaned is so that we can have a relationship with Jesus. If we aren’t cleaned, then we have as it says in verse 8, “no part with Him”. Once we put our faith in Him, He can cleanse us and we have been restored in a relationship with our Lord and that relationship cannot be changed. He died and cleansed us once and for all. and He wants everyone to believe and to see that you too can be cleansed by Him and be a faithful servant for Jesus.

We see that Peter had told Jesus that He would never wash his feet. He didn't understand how someone like Jesus could wash his feet. He refused it at first, but when he discovered that to refuse the Lord would mean to lose the Lord's fellowship, he switched his answer quickly and asked for a complete bath! Peter and the rest except Judas, had experienced the full cleansing of salvation and did not need to be bathed again in the spiritual sense. Salvation is a one-time act of justification by faith. As we walk through the world, some of the world's spiritual filth will cling to us, and that needs to be washed away—forgiven by Christ. **1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."** Just as we need to clean our physical feet off every now and then, we also need to wash our spiritual feet off to cleanse us living in a sin cursed world. God wants us to be cleansed, to be made new, and to have a relationship with Him. Jesus wanted to serve us by ultimately taking our sin and going to the cross to show us His love and glory.

We see that Peter and Judas both had a very different stance in this situation. Jesus did wash Judas's feet, but He was not truly cleansed. Judas had not been bathed all over. In John 6, the Lord speaks about how Judas was was never truly cleansed. To be a true servant of Jesus, we must put our faith in Him to truly cleanse us. And if we are a believer, we need to continue to have our feet washed to be a servant.

**Last point: A servant must follow Jesus's example: Verse 12-17**

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. <sup>13</sup> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you

should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus asked if they understood what He was trying to teach them. Jesus says to His disciples that He has set before them an example. He had showed them how to be a humble servant and they should do the same. In a society today, serving others can be almost a rarity. Society is such an all about me and what can make me happy, but happiness is the result of circumstances. Serving gives us joy because we have a God who is worthy to be served.

D L Moody once said that “The measure of a man is not how many servants he has, but how many men he serves.” We receive the blessing and joy of pointing others to our Savior Jesus.

Christians are to be servants. True greatness and joy is found by looking at Jesus and what He has done. Jesus came as a humble servant. He humbled Himself. He was not humbled. There was none in heaven or on earth or in the abyss that could humble Him. Not Herod. Not Pilate. Not the high priest. Not the Romans. He humbled Himself. But He will humble us if we will not do it ourselves. Although Jesus could have come to demand us to serve Him as He deserves. He didn’t come here to be served, but to serve and save all of us.

There are different practical ways to wash someone else’s feet everyday...Praying for people. Sharing God’s Word. Just being there. Helping. Listening to people. One time I was up in Provencal with my friend Slade and my best buddy Will. We had just finished our finals at McNeese for the semester and we decided to go deer and squirrel hunting. We had stopped by Will’s Dad’s office at work and he had a sign hanging up for his employees to see each day that



said, "God gave you 2 ears and 1 mouth so that you can listen twice as much as you talk." I busted out laughing and then realized dang, there's some power in those words. It's so true though...if you listen close enough you can hear how others around us need help and how they can be served. Look at 1 Peter 4:10. It says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Peter is writing here to give encouragement to persecuted Christians in the Asian Minor and here he is saying that despite any kind of suffering that might in the way, use what God has given you, do it with strength and love by being a servant to others. God has given us these gifts to use and equip us to share the gospel and to show His love and glory for all to see. A couple verses later it says that in everything we do will bring glory to God. Being a servant and representing Jesus glorifies the Father.

There was a first grade teacher asked her students, "What do you do to help at home?"

One little girl said, "I dry the dishes."

One of the boys said, "I sweep the floor."

Another one said, "I give food and water to the dog."

Every student in the class had something to contribute except for one boy sitting in the back. The teacher looked at him asked, "What do you do to help out at home?"

He said, "I stay out of the way."

That's a problem! Too many church members in our world today just stay out of the way. A Gallup poll discovered that only 10% of church members are active in any kind of personal ministry in their church. 50% said that they have no desire or interest in serving in any ministry. We need more people serving in church and even outside of the church. The more we are able to

serve, the healthier a church family we will have, and ultimately can glorify God and point others to the hope, life, and forgiveness that's found in Jesus. [Matthew 5:16](#) says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

[Romans 12:11](#) says, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

We can talk about this awesome story and how we can be servants all day long, but we need to put this into action. Remember that old phrase monkey see, monkey do? We need to look at what Jesus did and be obedient to do what He says and does.

[James 1:22-25](#) says, [22](#) But be doers of the message and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves, [23](#) because if anyone is a hearer of the message and not a doer, this one is like someone staring at [his own face] in a mirror, [24](#) for he looks at himself and goes away and immediately forgets what sort of person he was. [25](#) But the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues to do it, not being a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts, this one will be blessed [in what he does].

Jesus didn't just come live here on earth for 33 years just to tell us what we need to hear, but to be doers of the Word. Jesus always put words into actions. He did the greatest action for us, by dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus is the true example and best servant there ever will be. True greatness in His kingdom is attained by those with a servant's heart and [verse 17](#) says that we will be blessed.

## Invitation: bib and apron

Everyone used to wear a bib when they were a baby. Babies and immature children wear bibs and expect others to meet their needs. The mark of spiritual maturity occurs when a believer takes off the bib and puts on an apron. Those who put on aprons have learned the joy of serving others.

Some of you in here have your aprons on are constantly serving...I encourage you to keep serving others and to continue to have joy in serving. Some of you are believers and still have your bib on...I encourage you and urge you to be bold and pick up your towel and put on your apron to serve others, follow Jesus's example, and glorify Him. Some of you in the room this morning may have never experienced the joy in being a servant and have never put your faith and trust in Jesus. There is hope...make that decision this morning to put your faith and trust in Jesus. John 3:16 says, *"<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* God loved you and I so much that He sent His only Son Jesus to be a servant but also the savior! This morning, I ask you, are you aware of opportunities around you to serve others? Are you being a servant that shows humility? Have you put your faith in Jesus and let Him cleanse you? Are you wearing a bib or an apron?

He is the way, the truth, and the life and no one goes to the Father except through Him. Jesus is the answer we need y'all and the Lord delivered. This morning, I invite you to put your faith and trust in Jesus. To start living and being a servant for Him. I promise you; it'll be the best decision you've ever made. Let's pray!