

Teaching with a Towel

January 8, 2023

Series: Living the Good Life (Gospel of John)

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[John 13:1-38](#)

-So here in ch. 13, we see the beginning of what we have recorded as Jesus' private ministry to His disciples (last days before His death/resurrection)

-This is a fairly well-known story where Jesus gets down and washes the feet of His disciples.

Setting/details:

-([John 13:1-5](#)) *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. And supper being ended, the devil having now put 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 was come from God, and went to God; 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.*

-The timing is actually about a day before the crucifixion was going to happen—a meal with His disciples the same night He would be double-crossed and arrested.

-Jesus' motivation for this special time with His disciples: *having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end*

-What Jesus was doing / about to do with His disciples was all out of love from them—He loved them so much that instead of focusing on the dread of what He knew was getting ready to go down, He slowed down to teach and assure the hearts of His disciples.

-All the way to the end, Jesus was demonstrating an others-first kind of love for His disciples (& I say, by perpetual application, love for us too!)

-This task of washing feet was usually reserved for non-Jewish slaves—a demeaning task—certainly not respectable by the majority!

-So that's the setting and the details—Jesus uses His actions & what happens next to teach a few important truths.

1. Truth about Cleansing ([John 13:6-11](#))

-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. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 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. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

-Peter seemed to be a bit of a spokesman-type for the disciples and He says to Jesus—I can't let YOU WASH MY FEET!

-Jesus said to Peter in v. 7, "You don't understand the significance of all this, but you will soon!"

-Peter insists in v. 8, "I'll never let You do this, Lord...this is ridiculous that you're trying to do a slave's task for me—this is awkward, Lord!"

-Jesus tells Peter, "If you don't get washed by Me, you have no part of Me."

-“part” (meros) = share / portion / i.e. communion

-i.e. If you don't get the continual washing Jesus offers, you cannot be considered in communion with Him.

-Jesus uses this interaction to teach some truths about the cleansing of sin that God offers through Jesus Christ.

-His provision of salvation includes a once-for-all Cleansing – when a person receives, by faith, the finished work of Christ on their behalf, they become what the Bible calls “saved” – they become fully saved by God from their sins for all eternity—Positional Cleansing—this is a cleansing that happens only one time and it's finished!

-After Peter essentially says, “then wash all of me,” Jesus says in v. 10, “the person who has already had a bath (diff. word for wash than earlier) doesn't need another bath—they just need their feet washed again.”

-We don't need the cleansing of the blood of Jesus for our salvation over and over—it happens once, in the moment we receive Jesus as our Savior—we are “eternally secure” in that gift of salvation!

-However, we have to do something with: *He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit*

-save to wash his feet = you don't need another bath, but you DO need continual cleansing of your feet as they keep getting dirty.

-You don't get saved over and over, but you do need some type of cleansing regularly after you get saved.

-Our struggle with sin does not go away when we get saved—there is still danger of hurting our fellowship/communion with God even as children of His through Christ.

-One of the pictures Jesus paints for us with the washing of His disciples' feet is that we need continual fellowship maintenance and treatment because we continue to battle sin even after we become Christians.

-It is important to note—this is not a self-washing; this is a washing done by Jesus.

-We need Jesus to cleanse our sin for salvation and we still need Jesus for the cleansing of our sin in sanctification.

-3 practical approaches to dealing with personal sin as a believer (A-C-T):

1. Acknowledge that the struggle is real.
2. Confess sin for what it is when it happens.
3. Trust the cleansing forgiveness of Christ.

-1 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 when you sin after salvation, please know that you are not in danger of losing salvation, but cleansing is needed as you continue to experience the battle with sin along the road of the Christian life.

2 Considerations—

1. Have you been initially and eternally cleansed by the blood of Christ?
2. Are you continually going to Christ in repentance for His cleansing of your sin as you embrace continual closeness with Him?