



## Gospel Community Notes & Questions

**Title:** Servant Jesus

**Text:** John 13:1-17

**Theme:** Let the humble, servant-minded love of Christ shape you into a humble, servant minded lover of others.

**Teaching Notes:** During the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus rose from the table, poured a basin of water, and began to wash their feet. This prompts an awkward exchange with Peter, where he first denies the Lord the opportunity to wash his feet, then asks him to wash all of him. Jesus concludes by commanding the disciples to do for one another what he had done to them. This sermon unpacks the meaning of both the foot washing itself and Jesus' command that his followers should continue to do as he had done.

### Outline:

#### 1. A display of character. (vv. 1-5)

- a. Love.
- b. Humility.
- c. Servanthood.

#### 2. A parable of cleansing. (vv. 6-11)

- a. You must be completely purified by Christ's salvation.
- b. You must be continuously cleansed by Christ's sanctification.

#### 3. A model of Christian conduct. (vv. 12-17)

- a. A pattern.
  - "Do as I have done to you" is more about imitating the humble attitude and lifestyle of Jesus than copying the specific act of foot washing, which has lost its cultural relevance.
- b. A promise.
  - Those who live this way are "blessed" – i.e. happy, honored, exalted in God's kingdom.
- c. A prerequisite.
  - You must know what time it is: the end of all things is at hand.
  - You must genuinely love others.
  - You must accept your God-given mission.
  - You must find your identity in Christ.



**Questions to explore individually and with your group:**

1. Have you ever washed someone's feet or permitted them to wash yours because of this text of Scripture? If so, what was that experience like?
2. If you've never washed someone's feet or permitted them to wash yours because of this text, why is that? What did/do you make of Jesus' command that his followers were to go and do the same?
3. What are some exegetically good reasons to believe Jesus wanted his followers to imitate the spirit/attitude of foot washing more so than that specific rite?
4. If we're called to imitate the spirit of what Jesus did in washing his disciples' feet, how would you summarize or describe that spirit?
5. List several specific, actionable ways you could imitate the spirit of foot washing in our modern, Western context. What kinds of problems could you solve; what kinds of needs could you meet?
6. What does this story have to do with forgiveness (in addition to humble servanthood)? How was foot washing symbolic of acceptance?
7. What kind of cleansing/forgiveness was Jesus illustrating when he told Peter since he was already "bathed," he only needed to have his feet washed? What are some things (like your feet) that bring you into contact with a sinful world?
8. Why do you need to know what time it is in God's redemptive plan in order to imitate the attitude and lifestyle that Jesus exemplified in this story?
9. Why do you need to find your life's mission and identity in God in order to imitate Jesus? What happens when you try to imitate Jesus' humility and servanthood without understanding your mission and identity?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this Scripture?

**Prayer Prompts:**

1. Praise Jesus for loving you so much he delighted in humble, menial service.
2. Acknowledge how you come into contact with the sinful world in ways that get both "on" you and "in" you. Invite the Lord to wash you clean.
3. Ask God to show you specific opportunities to display his love by humbly, affectionately serving others around you, particularly other disciples of Jesus. Where you don't genuinely love others, ask God to bear his love in you.