



Life Group Study Notes

“At Your Service, Part 4”

Ps. James Lowe - June 26, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What's the craziest sacrifice you did for "love" when you were a teenager or young adult?
- What kind of motivation or reinforcement (if any) did your parents use to make sure you did house chores?
- What are some ways you practically show your love for your family?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

John 13:1-17 ESV *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 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.*

- The heart and attitude of Jesus in this moment is amazing. He knew what lay before him: betrayal, desertion, and denial by the disciples, and false accusation, torture, crucifixion, and mockery from his opponents. Instead of withdrawing inward and seeking isolation, he practically served his disciples and taught them the value of service by means of a significant object lesson.
- Jesus did not serve his disciples in this moment based on their requests, but based on their needs. This sums up the entire nature of his coming into this world. While we were sinners, Christ came and died for us even though we had all gone astray.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet."

- There is a danger of entitlement that comes with positions of rank. Not so with Jesus. Peter rightly perceived the greatness of Jesus, but mistakenly thought because of this Jesus should not stoop to serve others in a menial manner. Jesus, however, taught them that leadership should be motivated by love and express itself in service. He demonstrated what he also taught: the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not

need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

- Faith in Jesus makes us clean in the eyes of God; we are declared righteous. But as we walk through this life we remain in constant need of cleansing; that is, sanctification. The words of Jesus are the words of God. When a person believes them, he/she is made clean by them. Those who don't believe in the Son remain in a state of uncleanness before God.
- God has called us to serve people both practically and spiritually.

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, 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 also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

- Jesus resumed his place after he served them in this menial, but needed way. He did not lose his place before God. In fact, he would receive the highest place of honor from the Father after he would give his life on the cross in service to the needs of a lost, sinful world. In the same way, we will be most honored by God when we serve others from love.
- If the greatest person of the highest rank stooped to serve people in such a "lowly" manner, how much more is it appropriate that we do likewise. In fact, Jesus has actually flipped the script. He has turned the values and ways of this world upside down and inside out. In his estimation, greatness is marked by service.
- It is not enough to agree with Jesus. It is necessary to do what he says to do. Jesus lived a blessed life. He was spiritually enriched in every way and enjoyed deep communion with the Father. He enjoyed friendships and food and social gatherings. And his ability to enjoy all of this sprang from his heart of love which expressed itself in service toward others.
- The ability to sacrificially serve others with a good attitude from a good heart depends on whether we have received Jesus' service to us. The more we rightly understand and value what he has done for us, the more we will desire to serve others.
- John, the beloved disciple who was present in this moment, later wrote much about love in action. In 1 John 3:18 (ESV) he wrote, "*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*"

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- How are you practically serving God's people? What about those outside the church?
- What need have you seen among God's people that you could help meet?
- What keeps you from serving others? How will you overcome and become a greater servant?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for the sacrificial service Jesus has given for you.
- Ask God to open your eyes to the needs of others, especially in your church and in your normal sphere of life.
- Ask God to speak clearly to you about your service to others (both in the church and outside it). Ask him what pleases him and what should change in your service.