

Talk It Over

Love Like Jesus (Week 2) Wash Feet

SMALL TALK

1. What's the nastiest, smelliest thing you've ever cleaned up?
2. Describe someone who serves you. What impact do they have on your life?

VIEWPOINT

3. **READ John 13:1-17.** Why do you think Jesus used some of His last hours with his disciples to wash their dirty feet?
4. **READ Matthew 23:11.** How does this truth make you feel about people you interact with each day?
5. Read and talk about any reactions you feel when reading these scriptures: Mark 10:35-45; Acts 20:35; Galatians 5:13-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Talk about a time you experienced the value of serving someone.
7. Do you serve at WVCC or in your community? How is that going?
8. Talk about times when you have been more and less involved in service. What patterns do you notice?
9. If you are not currently serving, where do you think God could use you?

MAKING PROGRESS

10. One of our core statements is, "Saved people serve people." What are some of the markers in your story that indicate that you have made progress serving in your family, your relationships, work, neighborhood, church, or community?

Wash Feet

Series: Love Like Jesus (week 2)

Focus: If we want to live like Jesus, we need to love like Jesus.

What makes it hard for you to serve others?

- Your schedule?
- Your energy?
- Your fear...based on a bad memory? Like the time you helped someone move, and found yourself carrying hide-a-bed couch up flights of stairs in an apartment complex! Then you decide to get smart the next time and ask where they are moving...and discreetly check to see if there are stairs... Only to discover when you arrive to help load the truck, they haven't packed anything in boxes yet... You look at your watch and know you are in for a very long day.

There are many possible answers. How about this? What makes it hard for you to serve others? **Others!** Can you relate to that?

Some people don't express their gratitude.

Some people take advantage of you.

Some people expect you to serve them again and again.

Some people get mad at you because they want MORE from you than you were able to give.

I think we have all have moments where we see a serving job and we think, "I'm not going to do *that!*" *That's* too much. Or *that is beneath me.*

We are looking once again at a passage we looked at not too long ago. I think this is the third time in less than six months. But here's the deal. Although we think, "I know this one, I've got it, we really don't." We are just like Jesus' disciples who needed this lesson. The disciples heard truths before and thought, "I know this one, but they didn't." There was an obvious gap between the truth Jesus taught and what they actually caught. Jesus saw this glaring gap on this particular occasion and that's the occasion for what we are about to read. So, although we heard it taught a couple times already in the last six months, there is still a gap in us between what was taught and what we caught, and this time perhaps another angle will help us. I know there is a gap in me and I studied it, taught it 6 times. So, let's look again.

John 13:1 (NIV) 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.

Jesus knew. He knows it was time to leave this world. He knew what was coming. He was going to be killed. He was going to leave and there were some important things his disciples obviously still didn't have down.

John 13:2 (NIV) The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

John remembers that day vividly. He remembered how Jesus already knew Judas had made plans to betray him. He remembered Jesus' predictions. He wrote about these later, but he puts the dark backdrop against what Jesus knows.

John 13:3-4 (NIV) Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and

was returning to God; {4} so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

This is the second time in a few sentences that John tells us what Jesus "knew".

Jesus knew this too. To know all this is beyond the human mind to grasp. He knew where he came from, where he was going, what he came for, and what was coming. He knew his identity... He knew that what was coming was going to be terrible...but he was willing to pay the price!

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV) ... For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame...

Like a runner in a race, he didn't focus on the pain, he focused on the prize at the end of the race.

John 13:5 (NIV) 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.

I. The GREATEST among you will be your SERVANT

Matthew 23:11(NIV) The greatest among you will be your servant.

II. Those who EXALT themselves will be HUMBLED

Matthew 23:12(NIV) For those who exalt themselves will be humbled...

The disciples agreed with Jesus teaching, thinking *that's right.. we know that*. They agreed with what they had been taught but Jesus saw they still had not really caught what was taught. It didn't stick yet. They only served when it seemed like the thing to do. They didn't if they didn't want to. Some things were beneath their consideration.

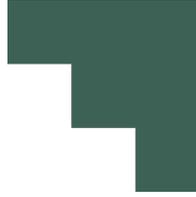
Serving is not what I do, a SERVANT is who I am! Serving isn't just about ACTIONS; it's about ATTITUDES.

But what Jesus saw that night was that his disciples had not yet caught the lesson. Nobody was going to stoop to servant status to wash feet. Nobody was willing to *do that*. That was a servant's job. Then Jesus burns the lesson into their lives. Nobody is too important to serve.

And when you serve... don't do this! **[take out phone and take a shot while stooping to wash feet]** for as a self-promotional post.

III. Those who HUMBLE themselves will be EXALTED

Matthew 23:12(NIV) For those who exalt themselves will be humbled... and those who humble themselves will be exalted.



This is our logo. What do you see? I know, it looks like a stealth bomber. I want you to see more than that. I want you to see an arrow pointing upward, with steps going downward. The path to exaltation (upward) is to humble ourselves like Jesus and walk downward.

Matthew finally caught it. Only if you humble yourself will you be exalted.

John finally caught it. He tells us again here that Jesus stepped from glory, he took off the clothing of glory, and stood in the towel as a servant, he took the position of a servant and washed away our stink, but only if we'll let him.

Paul caught it! Paul in Philippians 2 described Jesus' ministry as the descent from divine glory to humility, becoming a human, a servant to the point of death. And because he humbled himself like no other, God exalted him with the highest exaltation. Paul's point of telling us this theology was to tell us to have the same attitude as Jesus, considering others as better than ourselves. It is more important to serve others than to serve ourselves.

Peter finally caught it! He wrote..

1 Peter 2:21 (NIV) To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

And Peter did! Following Jesus to the death, a death on a cross..and upside down, by his request! He didn't think he was worthy of the same honor.

But perhaps we need to stop focusing on the heroic, and focus on stepping down to that which we would otherwise think is beneath us.

If we want a heart that beats like Jesus, we will see needs, and these needs will stink. Your natural heart will immediately react: No, this need is beneath me. I have too much going on. I'm too busy for this. Someone else besides me should be the one to do this. The next time you have this kind of reaction to a need please remember Jesus.

Romans 5:8 (NIV) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We stunk when Jesus served us.

A Trip to the Bathroom

While serving with Operation Mobilization in India in 1967, tuberculosis forced me into a sanitarium for several months. I did not yet speak the language, but I tried to give Christian literature written in their language to the patients, doctors, and nurses. Everyone politely refused. I sensed many weren't happy about a rich American (to them all Americans are rich) being in a free, government-run sanitarium. (They didn't know I was just as broke as they were!)

The first few nights I woke around 2:00 A.M. coughing. One morning during my coughing spell, I noticed one of the older and sicker patients across the aisle trying to get out of bed. He would sit up on the edge of the bed and try to stand, but in weakness would fall back into bed. I didn't understand what he was trying to do. He finally fell back into bed exhausted. I heard him crying softly.

The next morning I realized what the man had been trying to do. He had been trying to get up and walk to the bathroom! The stench in our ward was awful. Other patients yelled insults at the man. Angry nurses moved him roughly from side to side as they cleaned up the mess. One nurse even slapped him. The old man curled into a ball and wept. The next night I again woke up coughing. I noticed the man across the aisle sit up and again try to stand. Like the night before, he fell back whimpering.

I don't like bad smells, and I didn't want to become involved, but I got out of bed and went over to him. When I touched his shoulder, his eyes opened wide with fear. I smiled, put my arms under him, and picked him up. He was very light due to old age and advanced TB. I carried him to the bathroom, which was just a filthy, small room with a hole in the floor. I stood behind him with my arms under his armpits as he took care of himself. After he finished, I picked him up, and carried him back to his bed. As I laid him down, he kissed me on the cheek, smiled, and said something I couldn't understand.

The next morning another patient woke me and handed me a steaming cup of tea. He motioned with his hands that he wanted a tract. As the sun rose, other patients approached and indicated they also wanted the booklets I had tried to distribute before. Throughout the day nurses, interns, and doctors asked for literature.

Weeks later an evangelist who spoke the language visited me, and as he talked to others he discovered that several had put their trust in Christ as Savior as a result of reading the literature. What did it take to reach these people with the gospel? It wasn't health, the ability to speak their language, or a persuasive talk. I simply took a trip to the bathroom.

Doug Nichols, Bothell, Washington. *Leadership*, Vol. 15, no. 2.

While you think *I'm too important*, think again. Jesus was not too important for you.

John 13:15 (NIV) I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Do you want to change your marriage? Serve your spouse.
Do you want to change your friendships? Serve your friends.
Do you want more meaning in life? Serve someone else.
Do you want to make a difference in the world? Serve your community.
Do you want to honor Jesus? Serve the least of these.

By the way, "Verde Serve" is this Saturday.

My dear Lord Jesus,

As the Father loved you, you loved us. It was because of love that you left glory behind to enter our world of darkness and sin to serve and rescue us, and yet you experienced the full measure of Your Father's love and joy while you loved and served. I

want to love like you. I receive your love, and your joy, that I may love and serve others as you have loved and served me.
Amen!