



## H

### HIGHLIGHT: John 13:1-20

Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup>Now by the time of supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Him. <sup>3</sup>Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into His hands, that He had come from God, and that He was going back to God. <sup>4</sup>So He got up from supper, laid aside His robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself. <sup>5</sup>Next, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel tied around Him.

<sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, "What I'm doing you don't understand now, but afterward you will know."

<sup>8</sup>"You will never wash my feet—ever!" Peter said.

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

<sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

<sup>10</sup>"One who has bathed," Jesus told him, "doesn't need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you." <sup>11</sup>For He knew who would betray Him. This is why He said, "You are not all clean."

<sup>12</sup>When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His robe, He reclined again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? <sup>13</sup>You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you.

<sup>16</sup>"I assure you: A slave is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I'm not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me.

<sup>19</sup>"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.

<sup>20</sup>I assure you: Whoever receives anyone I send receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."



## EXPLAIN

**Leaders: Feel free to use any of the “Explain” materials to guide discussion as it is needed or to expound on a certain area of the text as it comes up during your Life Group time, but the purpose of this section is to deepen your own personal understanding of the Word. Your members have access to all of this material as well.**

Jesus chose to spend His final hours on earth with His twelve closest disciples, those with whom He'd spent the majority of His earthly ministry. As He distributed the elements of Passover and explained the events that were to come, He was also demonstrating even further that He was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy—and ultimately commissioning His disciples to carry on the work that He began. In today's passage, we are going to see how Jesus is the one who cleanses us from all unrighteousness and consecrates us for service, all to the glory of God.

- v.1           The Passover feast would have been an exciting time for Jews in Israel. Emotions and religious joy would have been running high with the influx of people flooding the streets and homes with stories of what God had done. That it was Passover is hardly a coincidence for Jesus' timeline, too: at the time of this dinner, the passover lamb was being prepared for sacrifice the next day; so, too, was Jesus preparing His disciples for His own sacrifice as the Perfect Lamb.
  
- v.2           The evening meal was an important one in Jewish culture: it brought families and friends together to share intentional, relaxing, nourishing time in one another's presence. It was also important in Jesus' ministry: His first miracle took place at a wedding feast, He shared a meal at Matthew's house with “tax collectors and sinners” (Mt. 9:10), He dined with Zacchaeus at his house in Jericho (Lk. 19:5-10), and He exposed all of the truth about Himself in the Tanakh to the disciples on the road to Emmaus over a meal (Lk. 24:30-32). This context would have made what He was about to tell His disciples way easier to hear.
  
- v.4           Washing feet was a task reserved only for servants (1 Sa. 25:41; Lk 7:44; 1 Tim 5:10). This can be viewed on one level as a contrast to the disciples' dispute about which was greatest (Lk. 22:24-27), but should also be viewed in relation to the Passion narrative. As Jesus was having one final meal to prepare the ministers of His Gospel for the work that lay ahead of them, He demonstrated both His servant nature and His Divine power to make them clean by washing their feet.
  
- v.8           When Jesus told Peter that unless He washes him, Peter has no part with Him, the word “part” is used in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) to describe an inheritance. In this case, it is the inheritance of fellowship with Jesus, Himself. Even though Peter was thinking of the foot washing as nothing more than a customary practice, Jesus imposed deep spiritual meaning onto it. Through His death on the cross, Jesus will cleanse all who would allow him to “wash their feet.” Unless we are washed clean by Jesus, we can have no part of the kind of life—both now and in the life to come—that He offers.
  
- vv.12-17   While verses 7-11 address the theological significance of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, the next section brings it in to physical focus, as well. Not only was Jesus demonstrating who He was in the grand theme of Salvation, He was also demonstrating the kind of attitude His disciples were to have as they went out to continue the work He commissioned them to do. After we've been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, He commissions us to do the work that brings Him glory.



## APPLY

*Your Leader Guide will have material that the member guides do not have. The **bolded material** is what the people in your group will have, the other material is only for you to help guide discussion.*

*This guide can be as strict a script or as general a resource as the leader needs it to be.*

1. **What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?**
2. **Who is someone in your life that you would characterize as selfless? What do they do that makes you say that? How does it make you feel to be around them?**
3. **How does it make you feel when someone goes out of their way to do something selfless for you—without asking for anything in return? Do you identify with Peter's response in verse 8? Why or why not?**

Many of us are no good at all at being served with no strings attached. We have a sort of innate desire to want to “even the score.” It's hard to be the recipient of true, humble service. In a lot of ways, it takes more humility to humbly receive a free gift than it does to give one. But this is exactly what Jesus was exemplifying—by humbling Himself to such a level as to die a shameful death in our stead, He was demonstrating the kind of humility it requires to receive it in the first place.

4. **Jesus asked His disciples a question in verse 12. How would you respond to Him if He asked you that? How does it make you feel that He did what He did for you? In light of what He's done for us, what should our response be?**

Knowing what Jesus has done for us is the first step toward accepting the gift He offers. He made Himself like one of us and suffered at our hands for the purpose of cleansing us from sin that we committed in order that we may enter into fellowship with God—the most humbling fact in all of history. It changes everything about who we are and washes us clean of even the darkest stains we could imagine, which makes it amazing; it is something we could never begin to deserve, which makes it grace.

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He told them in verse 15 they are to take this example of humility and live it out with others. True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.

5. **What commission have we received as people who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus? How do you think being cleansed and commissioned by Jesus should affect how we live among our families? Our co-workers? Our communities?**

Jesus called those who follow Him to go and make disciples of the nations, and to be His witnesses to the end of the world. This is not a burden that has been placed upon us, it's the natural reaction that someone would have to recognizing the unfathomable gift they've been given. If somebody handed you a thousand-dollar check and said, “You don't owe me anything in return; you're important to me and so I wanted you to have this,” you'd likely tell everyone you came into contact with about what this person did for you. How much more are we to do this with the One who cleansed our souls?



## RESPOND

Challenge your group to answer:

- **Since we have been cleansed and commissioned by Jesus, who is one person who needs to hear about what He's done in you?**

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.



