**In the Upper Room (1) – Washing Feet**

*John 13:1-17*

**Introduction**

1. **Luke 22:7-13** – Time approaching to eat Passover meal, Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare for the feast.
   1. Feast observed in ***“a large, furnished upper room.”***
   2. **(v. 14)** – Jesus sat down with His chosen 12 to eat the Passover with them.
   3. **Referred to as “the Last Supper” – Not in scripture, but notes the fact that this meal was prior to His death on the cross.**
2. **John 13:1** – Jesus especially approached this Passover with much on His mind.
   1. His death and departure to the Father.
   2. His love for the disciples.
   3. ***“He loved them to the end”*** – “the utmost degree” (VINE on John 13:1) – **not to His death, but to the uttermost** – Serves to describe all that is included in the ***“upper room”*** discourse, as well as His death that would soon follow, i.e. it was a manifestation of His love for the disciples in a most devoted, and absolute way. (**These teachings given by Jesus are of great importance.**)
3. The Synoptic gospels each record only a few verses worth of the events, while John records from chapters 13-17. (***14:31 – “Arise, let us go from here,”*** very likely that He spoke the remaining words while still in the upper room – ***“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples” – 18:1***)
4. That which is likely first in chronological order was the washing of the disciples’ feet by Jesus **(cf. John 13:1-17).** 🡪
5. Washing Feet (What it is, what it isn’t – not a religious practice instituted by Jesus.)
6. Ceremony Instituted by Jesus?
   1. **Some religiously observe literal foot washing in association with the Lord’s Supper.**
   2. To observe such is to practice ***“self-imposed religion” (Colossians 2:23)***.
   3. **Presumptuous to conflate foot washing with the Lord’s Supper:**
      1. Lord’s Supper recorded in synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), but not in John.
      2. Foot washing recorded in John, but not in the synoptic gospels.
      3. **John did not record the LS, for the other gospels had. If foot washing was included in such, the others would have recorded it, as well as John recording the LS. (Otherwise, the record of the institution would be incomplete.)**
      4. Also, Paul does not mention foot washing in **1 Corinthians 11**…
   4. We must have authority for what we do **(cf. Colossians 3:17).**
      1. *To worship God in any way other than that which He has specified, regardless of intentions, is unacceptable worship.*
      2. ***“And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).***
7. A Custom
   1. **Genesis 18:4** – Abraham provided water for the washing of the feet of the 3 men of the Lord who appeared to him.
      1. *“The washing of the feet, which were partly at least uncovered in walking” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible).*
      2. **Not closed shoes like that available to us** – leads to dirty feet wherever you go, hence, the “freshening up” in washing them upon entering a residence.
   2. **Genesis 19:2** – Lot also invited in 2 angels into his home, that they could ***“wash [their] feet…[and] rise early and go on [their] way.”***
   3. Often times performed by a servant of the household (**cf. 1 Samuel 25:41**).
   4. **Thus, it was an act of servitude, hospitality, and humility to wash another’s feet – the lesson Jesus was teaching.**
      1. The literal washing of feet was not the point – customs change.
      2. **The attitude in washing of feet, and its general representation of servitude and hospitality was the point – this does not change.**
      3. **Cf. 1 Timothy 5:9-10** – Qualifications of the widow who the church can take into her number. (Obviously a consideration of hospitality.)
8. Divine Service **(vv. 3, 8)**
9. Foundation of Jesus’ Action – Divine Nature
   1. **John 13:3** – The thought of His divine authority, origin, and return to God.
      1. God had given Jesus all authority **(cf. Matthew 28:18).**
      2. Jesus is the Word who was in the beginning with God **(cf. John 1:1).**
      3. Jesus will be exalted to the right hand of God – He was ***“exalted to the right hand of God…Gad has made [Him]…both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:33, 36).***
      4. **(vv. 4-5)** – This thought did not lead Him to boasting, nor the demand to be served, but to assuming the role of servant Himself. (*Greatness expressed in service – paradoxical and profound.)*
   2. **Colossians 1:15-20** – His preeminence is demonstrated, not in tyranny, but in servitude – bringing salvation to mankind.
      1. His preeminence means we must submit wholly to His authority (**cf. Colossians 3:17).**
      2. But it is with the intention ***“to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight” (1:22).***
10. Divine Service of Jesus
    1. **It is extremely important that Jesus served in this capacity.**
    2. Peter was out of place once again, but the profundity of Jesus’ actions are demonstrated in his reaction:
       1. **(v. 6-8a)** – Peter saw Jesus rise from the table, and place Himself in the role of a humble servant.
       2. Despite Jesus’ words that He will understand a little later, Peter showed his impetuous nature.
       3. **(v. 8b)** – In order to have part with the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of mankind, we must let Him serve us – wash us (spiritually).
       4. **(vv. 9-11)** – Peter still did not fully grasp what Jesus had indicated. Jesus suggests the washing of feet was enough to prove His point.
    3. **Philippians 2:5-8** – Not even Jesus was above becoming a servant for others, and it is we that especially needed such service.
    4. ***“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”*** 🡪
11. Divine Service Imitated **(vv. 12-17)**
12. ***“you also ought to wash one another’s feet”***
    1. **John 13:12-17** – This act of Jesus was not an institution of ceremonial religious observance to be performed in tandem with the Lord’s Supper, **but as an example of proper conduct among ourselves as Christians.**
       1. **(vv. 13-14, 17)** – ***“Teacher and Lord”*** is supposed to be more than an honorary title given Jesus**. It carries with it the necessity of imitation of what He did, and obedience to what He says**. (*Be imitators of Christ, and doers of His word*.)
       2. **(vv. 15-16)** – We should not think ourselves above such actions. If Jesus humbled Himself to servitude, so should we.
          1. **Cf. Luke 22:24-27** – (Also in upper room) Leaders of Gentiles like to have honorary title (*Benefactors – which was wholly untrue, and only for self-praise*), but the apostles would use their great authority to SERVE.
    2. **Philippians 2:3-4** – The call to be like Christ ***(“let this mind be in you”)*** is a call to humility, and service of others. ***(“we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” Romans 12:5).***
13. A Condition of Salvation
    1. **In order to have part with Jesus, we must let Him “wash” us, serve us. However, we MUST also reciprocate that servitude 🡪**
    2. **Cf. Matthew 25:31-46** – When we serve (wash the feet of) our brethren, we are serving Christ. When we neglect to do so, we neglect Christ**. (vv. 35, 36, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46)**
    3. ***“If I then…you also ought to…”***

**Conclusion**

1. This lesson of washing feet would be especially important for the apostles, as they would serve in a great capacity in the kingdom – being the foundation of the church, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone (**cf. Ephesians 2:20**).
2. In His greatness, the Lord saw us as those in need of that which His greatness could afford. He did not ***“count it robbery to be equal with God,”*** but became our servant.
3. We are called to do the same to one another, and rightly so.