

Topic	The Glory of Love
Reference	John 13:1-20
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In addition to Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, showing his love through this lowly act of service, Jesus was also pointing forward to the fact that he would offer his life as a sacrifice to cleanse them from sin. When I think of that story then I think that's really the story of, that's the glory of love. Jesus's disciples experienced the glory of God's deep love for them in a very real tangible way as Jesus washed their feet and as he pointed forward to the future to what he would be doing when he would wash them from their sins as he gave his life for them on the cross. We too today can experience the glory of God's love. We can experience God's glory in our lives when we recognize who Jesus truly is, when we understand Jesus servant heart of love, when we respond in faith to Jesus sacrificial cleansing and when we go to the feet of others as servants and messengers of Jesus. Would you like the reality of the glory of God's love to be a vital part of your every day experience? First of all, recognize or be reminded of who Jesus truly is.

The first three verses provide the background for the story of Jesus washing his disciple's feet and these verses explain who Jesus really is and it explains who is now going to assume the role of being a lowly servant. The setting is right before the Passover feast. This was a special celebration when the Jewish remembered that God had freed their ancestors from slavery in Egypt and when they remembered how God had kept them alive during a terrible plague in Egypt through the blood of lambs that have been sacrificed then this blood had been sprinkled on the doorposts. So this is all pointing to the fact that Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God is going to sacrifice his life on the cross, thereby delivering the people from slavery to sin. The text says, Jesus knew that his hour had come.

Now throughout the gospel of John, we frequently see something about Jesus hour. Earlier we see Jesus saying, my hour or my time has not yet come. We will also see that the pharisees were trying to harm Jesus, but they were not able to and the scripture comments, because Jesus's hour had not yet come. Now Jesus hour had come. What does that mean? It means the time has arrived for Jesus to come to the climax of the culmination of his earthly ministry. Jesus came to the earth for the purpose of reconciling a lost world to God. Mankind's

willful rebellion against God had separated all of us from a close intimate personal relationship that God had intended to have with all of us, the crowning point of his creation. So Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sin, to remove the guilt and the shame which keeps us estranged from God. Jesus knew that his time was in God's hand and he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt what the future held that he would suffer and die, yet he was committed to doing God's will. He also knew, he would be raised back to life on the third day in victory over sin, death and the forces of evil and that he would ascend in triumph back to heaven, returning to his seat of authority at the right hand of God.

We also see that Jesus loved his own who are in the world. It reminds me at the very beginning of the gospel of John 1:11-12 where we see that Jesus came onto his own but his own received him not, but as many as received him he gave them power to become the sons of God, even those that believe on his name. So we see from the very beginning of the gospel that there are some people who will reject Jesus, others will receive him, believe in him. We have a conscious willful choice. Those who do receive Jesus then they become God's children and they truly become his own. We see that Jesus loved his own and he loves them to the end. Jesus is going to demonstrate how great his love was. Jesus did this by washing the disciples' feet, a task of a very low servant, but more than that he is also now going to point them to his ultimate act of love, his death on the cross. Verse 3 shows us even more about Jesus

3 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,

Jesus knew that God had given him all things, power and control. This shows that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. This makes the sacrifice even more profound. Jesus knew who he was. He was secure in his identity. He was confident of his relationship with God the father and he knew what his mission was. He knew he had come from God and he was going back to God. We see more about who Jesus is when we jump down to verse 19. He has been talking to his disciples about the fact that one of them will betray him in fulfillment of scripture and then he says, I am telling you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am. Jesus here uses the phrase I am which is the same phrase that God used back in Exodus.

We see that Jesus knew his identity, he was God in the flesh yet he willingly choose to wash dirty stinky feet. He knew he was God but he was willing to die to pay for the sin of mankind. When you realize who Jesus is that makes the sacrifice even more profound and He did it all because of love. Now that's the story of love, that's the glory of love. All the glory of God's love that we can

experience when we recognize who Jesus truly is. Secondly, we also see that we can experience the glory of God's love in our life when we understand Jesus's servant heart of love. Verse 3 ends with that Jesus knew he had come from God and was going back to God and then we see he rose from supper. More than likely it was the last supper. The disciples might have thought that something big is going to happen now. Maybe they were thinking about Jesus announcing his kingdom now and they will have a share in his political kingdom. The disciples were anxious about who is the greatest between them.

Jesus didn't speak anything, he took off his outer robe and the disciples are probably wondering what in the world is he doing. Then he puts a towel around his waist, pours water into a basin and begins to wash the feet of his disciples. This was a job that only the lowest of servants or slaves would do. The one who had been given all things by God, stripes himself of what might have been one of his only earthly possessions. This is unthinkable and unbelievable for the disciples. Jesus told them earlier

Matthew 20:26 But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The washing of feet is a job that was only for the very lowly servants, not even for a Jewish servant. In Asian culture feet are considered the lowest part of your body and if you point your feet at somebody that is the worst insult you can give to somebody. So, the lowliness of washing feet has not only to do with the dirt, it is also the disgrace you face from handling the lowest the most unclean part of the body, the bottom of somebody's foot. So, when Jesus humbles himself, he has humbled himself at feet that can be considered to be quite insulting. Remember, dinner was already been served. Food was on the table and people had to eat with their hands. Jesus uses his hands to wash dirty feet of his disciples. He got his hands dirty washing their feet. That's the story of, that's the glory of love. To experience God's love, we must understand Jesus servant heart of love.

You can experience the glory of God's love when you recognize who Jesus truly is and when you understand Jesus servant heart of love. To personally experience God's love, it is also essential to respond in faith to Jesus sacrificial cleansing. Now there is our story in the first part of John chapter 13 than it initially meets the eye.

John 13:6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

So these are stressing something about Jesus washing that makes us clean all over. When he washes us, he is not only concerned about our feet, he is concerned about our total cleansing. Jesus actions as a servant in this passage are pointing to the fact that he is truly a servant, the suffering servant that was prophesized by prophet Isaiah

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; The righteous one, my servant, shall make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their sins. from Isaiah 53

Jesus will cleanse his people from their sins through his sacrificial death. Jesus by taking the role of a servant cleaning the dirty feet of his disciples is pointing to his identity as a suffering servant. Jesus cleansing goes much further than just our feet. Jesus humbling himself to the lowest position a slave could have, in order to bring us cleansing also reminds us of the passage in Philippians

Philippians 2:6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus emptied himself. He became a servant. He humbled himself much lower than just the lowly job of washing dirty feet. He humbled himself to the point of death. So that we could be cleansed from the stain and the dirt of our sin. Now that's the glory of love.

So we see Jesus actions of being a servant to wash the dirt from the feet of his disciples is also pointing to Jesus ultimate action as a servant, washing away the sin of all who believe in him through his sacrificial death. To experience the glory of God's love we must respond in faith. It is not an automatic thing, we must decide, we must respond.

First of all, look at the reaction of Judas who rejected Jesus. He is the one that is referred to

John 13:10b Jesus said to him, "... . And you are clean, but not every one of you."
11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

Even more information is given about Judas in the passage of the scripture, where we see that even though Jesus had already washed Judas's feet, Judas still turns his back on Jesus. We see later in the text that at the meal Jesus offers Judas food, a token of friendship. Right after Jesus offered Judas the food, Judas got up and he left. It says he went out into the night, having closed his heart to the light Judas found himself to be the servant of darkness. Now we don't know what went through Judas's mind as he was resisting Jesus, possibly Judas surrendered to the spirit of greed. Possibly Judas do not want to follow a messiah who acted like a servant washing feet and then told him to go do the same thing. All this resistance to Jesus gave the devil an opportunity to work in Judas heart and prompt him to betray Jesus.

We see that even someone who has been in the presence of Jesus for a long time, who has been witness to his power still needs to make a personal conscious decision to place their faith in Jesus. We learned here that not all who are in the group are really his own. We see that it is possible to come to activities in church, being involved in a Christian family, associate with believers and not truly have the experience and acknowledge Jesus as your Lord and confess your sin and repent. Judas did not respond in faith, he rejected it.

In the text we also see the responses of Peter,

John 13:8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

I think Peter was probably thinking, Jesus you should not be doing this, you are the Messiah, you are the anointed king, you are the head of this new kingdom you are going to establish, and kings do not wash feet. You should not be doing that. It is obvious that Peter did not really understand yet fully who Jesus was. He didn't understand the role of Jesus as the suffering servant. He had not yet grasped that Jesus was going to humble himself even to the point of death on the cross. Now Jesus had tried many times earlier to tell them that. First we see that Peter had the wrong idea of who the Messiah was. He wanted Jesus to conform to his ideas of who the Messiah should be. We also do the same today. So often we want Jesus to conform to our image. We want him to do our will. We expect God to do and behave like we want him to, but that's not the way it is. We think human thoughts not thoughts of God.

When God doesn't do as you think, will you respond like Judas, close your heart and reject or will you respond like Peter

9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

Now that's a response of faith. Peter said cleanse me Jesus, I am yours. We will experience the glory of God's love when we respond in faith to Jesus sacrificial cleansing, crying out wash all of me from head to toe, take all of me.

When we go to the feet of others as servants and messengers of Jesus we will experience the glory of God. Jesus set an example for us to follow. We see that in verses 14 and 15. After he had washed the feet of the disciples, Jesus said

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

Some people limit foot washing to be a physical act. Jesus is telling us to be servants. We follow his example. We humble ourselves and are willing to do even the most degrading of tasks, doing lowly deeds because of love. Jesus is now telling us to show your love to the full extent, be a servant, have a servant heart of love. We see that when we go onto the next verse because Jesus says

15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

We should be humble servants doing what Christ has done and we see in verse 16 that now Jesus sends us as his servants and as his messengers. Being sent as a servant is first of all about your attitude, it is not about the deeds to begin with, but first of all it is about your heart, your mind, because to be a servant that involves a radical change in our thinking and the change in our heart. It requires repentance from pride, humility is necessary. For most people, it doesn't just come naturally to give ourselves in service to others, especially to others who do not receive us well. When we allow Christ to change our heart and to change our mind, he will give us a servant's heart and then after the heart is being changed, the actions will follow.

If you will have a servant's heart, it will first of all be expressed in relationships with family, how you treat your wife, how you treat your husband, how you treat your children. If you have a servant's heart, it will be evidence in how you treat your maid, how you treat the security guards, how you treat your coworkers, how you treat your employees if you are the boss. Having a servant's heart will be

evident in how you treat migrant workers at restaurants or at petrol pumps. Ask yourself, what would it look like in my life to be a servant of Jesus, to go with the same servant heart to love that Jesus had to the feet of other people.

So, this morning ask God to show you what is like for you to be a servant and ask him to whom can I go and wash their feet figuratively speaking. Who can I show God's sacrificial love to.

We always want to have loving care from somebody, Jesus does and when we've experienced his love the question should not just be somebody love me like that but as a follower of Jesus, knowing his servant heart, let's ask ourselves the question, would I be somebody who loves other people the way Jesus does. Jesus sends us his servants. Jesus became a servant of God and a servant to other people to fulfil his role and now he calls us to sacrifice ourselves for the purposes of God. Jesus is not only sending us as his servants, he is also sending us as his messengers and ambassadors.

There are philanthropists in the world that do many good things but aren't necessarily doing it because of their relationship with Jesus. We are to Jesus's messenger so that through our love people will know that we are Jesus's disciples. They are not going to know that unless we open our mouth. We are to be servants of Christ and also messengers of the gospel, so that when people do hear and understand the good news about Jesus, when they see his work in our lives, when they clearly hear the gospel message then they come to the point that they will say, that's the glory of love. You can experience the glory of God's love when you recognize who Jesus truly is, when you understand his servant heart, when you respond in faith to his sacrificial cleansing and then when you go to the feet of others as a messenger of Jesus.