

The Teacher's Teaching

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we ask as we hear your word this morning that we would not just hear your word, but that we would do as of it. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, Jesus never fails to surprise, does he? He's always a surprising character. If you were the creator of the universe and everything had been given into your hands, how do you think you would handle this situation? You go into a room after walking around dusty streets all day and then you're tired and the sweat between your toes has made the dust into mud around your feet and then you're sweating and hot and your feet stink. And then you're a room full of people with stinking feet just like you. Who do you think should wash your feet?

I mean, you're the creator of the universe after all's said and done. Especially when it seems like the slave that should be on duty has signed off for the evening and then calmly, deliberately, lovingly, without even a hint of passive aggression, Jesus does it.

Jesus models humble service, humility and he calls his disciples to radical, humble service.

Humility is a concept that is at complete odds to our world. Our society is about image. Who I am what I'm like and how good I can be.

[2 : 13] Our modern world is a world of vanity. Something the writer of Ecclesiastes would call meaninglessness. Humility in many circles is seen not so much as a virtue these days but more a character flaw.

Our world says our world says you need to express yourself. You need to be who you are and proud of it and then puff your chest out so that others take notice of you and that you are a person of influence.

and yet paradoxically when we look at the ones in the world the great leaders of the world who have been like that we more than often despise them and think less of them.

Moses we are told was the most humble man in the world in Numbers chapter 12 and he has been exalted in history.

Pharaoh would not humble himself before God and he led his nation into destruction. we are told in Proverbs chapter 11 that pride comes then comes disgrace but with the humble is wisdom and we are told in James chapter 4 verse 6 God says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble and we will know C.S. Lewis he gives a definition of humility which is quite memorable and pithy and helpful do you know it?

[4 : 10] I'll remind you of it humility is not thinking less of yourself right humility is thinking of yourself less once heard never forgotten well the time is just about Passover time the Passover is about to be celebrated the time when the Israelites remembered their salvation from slavery God's great rescue of a slave nation out of an oppressor of Egypt and it's the night before the Passover meal itself it's Thursday night and it's not just the day it's also the hour yeah it's the hour has come to depart this world we're told in verse 1 last week we saw what brought about this hour remember what brought about this hour the Greeks have come to check out Jesus the whole world is now coming to Jesus and it's time for him to be lifted up to die that's what we read in chapter 12 verses 20 to 26 which is something that Jesus goes to knowing full well the pain and the agony and the suffering that will come with it as he will bear the wrath of God for the sins of the whole world past present and future and our time seems to slow down as we enter the last few hours of the life of

Jesus on earth during the supper Jesus is going to teach privately to his disciples and this is going to go on now to the end of chapter 17 and his departure see now before the feast of the Passover when Jesus knew this hour had come to depart out of this world and to the father his departure is not leaving the room his departure is leaving the world and with it a change in state from life to death and then will come a change in state from death to life and then will come a change in state

from life to being in glory at the right hand of the father which will then move that others can depart this world from death to life and immortality we read about in John chapter 5 verse 24 live from death to life and having loved his own who are in the world he loved them to the end his own we read about in chapter 1 verse 11 the Jewish nation he's loved them even though they hate him he loves them to the end to the end of his life even with his life and at the same time the devil's conspired with Judas to betray his lord the devil we are told has been put this evil into his heart it's not that Judas is not responsible for what he does but rather the plot against Jesus is nothing less than satanic in force

Judas is totally responsible for his actions he can't say the devil made me do it and escape culpability for it his own sinful heart in league with the devil conspires to have Jesus crucified and then we see something extraordinary Jesus washes his disciples feet what Jesus does is something that's reserved for the lowest of servants so the Jewish slaves wouldn't do this work but have to be a Gentile slave to wash the feet Peter true to form objects to Jesus doing this for him Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet verse 6 Jesus what are you talking about after all Jesus is his master and his Lord that's right he's adamant that Jesus will not wash them there in verse 8 just not right that

Jesus would do this now one of the things that makes the Bible believable is it reports the characters in it warts and all doesn't it it's good it's nothing like what the bragging we see on the Facebook or the Instagram page though the persona we want to present to the world ourselves or to read about others so we see warts and all Peter's character now just so you know off topic here I'm a bit of a sceptic when it comes to Facebook and Instagram just so you know you don't impress me when I see the perfect happy family blissful picture of mum and dad and the dog and the kids and the cat and the kitten and the fish when I see that kind of picture on Facebook and Instagram I start to wonder I think really the perfect family having the perfect holiday in heaven on earth I wonder what's really going on that family we actually get to read about Peter's failures and his foibles thinking about him knowing better than his master telling his master he shouldn't die in Mark chapter 8 telling his master not to wash his feet here in John chapter 13 denying his master fearing for his life later on in John chapter 18 and telling God what he wouldn't eat in Acts chapter 10 I like Peter and I like our account of him because of all his foibles he's relatable and the scriptures don't try and whitewash and hide the truth Jesus sticks with him when Peter is shown to make his mistakes and Peter almost goes overboard in his reaction doesn't he in his enthusiasm for Jesus he actually did jump overboard once as well remember that and swam to see him on the shore at this stage though he doesn't understand what Jesus is doing but then true to form he soon changes his tune when

[10:59] Jesus says that unless he washes him people have no part with him and then he's all in over the top he says not just my hands my feet my head everything as well Jesus do it not that he wants a bath but he's all in for Jesus serving him but in a way that Peter hasn't grasped yet Jesus is the one who can wash someone clean can wash us completely make us acceptable to God and unless Jesus washes someone clean well unless the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world washes someone clean then a person cannot be clean and so Jesus has Jesus will Jesus does wash them clean and did you read it as you read it notice that Jesus washed all the disciples feet come down to verse 10

Jesus said to him the one who is bathed does not need to wash but is completely clean and you are clean but not every one of you the word you is plural every one of them he's washed their feet but one of them is not clean Judas is not clean can you grasp it for a minute just grasp it for a minute Jesus was there serving in a lowly despised situation and even doing it for his enemy the one who hates him and going to betray him who's on Satan's payroll I wonder how tenderly Jesus washed his feet when it was Judas' turn and now what is it that Peter didn't understand about this in verse 7 that he would come to understand

I think it's like other parts of the gospel where we're told by the writer by John the writer and what it means is that when people didn't understand what Jesus was saying until after he'd risen from the dead then they got it then they understood what it's all about I take it that Jesus is pre-empting what he will do as he dies on the cross when he'll wash people completely Jesus is demonstrating his service his sacrificial service which will wash away the filth and the corruption of people and their sins it'll make us make people clean in God's eyes it'll wash us and make us whole we'll be washed and sanctified and justified by God by his death the hour is coming for this it's just hours away now

to be finally revealed then then they'll understand that unless

Jesus dies for you there is no place for you with Jesus get that Peter unless Jesus dies for me there is no place for me with Jesus either Roy and unless Jesus dies for us there is no place for us with Jesus either and once washed once cleaned you are clean you are okay with God well then Jesus resumes his seat you see there in verses 12 to 16 and his place is at the table and he asks a question that's on everyone's lips what what has just happened here when he washed their feet and put his outer garments and resumed his place to them do you understand what I've done for you what has gone on here and he's telling them in verse 15 that he has set an example for them of what they are to do here is the example of how to live and what to do

Jesus is someone who says do what I say and do what I do he doesn't call us to do something that he hasn't done himself first what has he done well let me highlight a few things what he's done first of all he's turned the table on status he's inverted status that's what he's done it is right that they call him teacher and lord that's who he is verse 13 that's exactly right he is their master they are his students he is the lord of the universe the creator of the universe the sustainer of the universe he has set the standard of greatness by becoming a lowly slave servant the greatest among you shall be the least now that's something you won't find in history books of ancient kings they're always great parading their vanquished behind them something you won't find in the kings of this world today who parade their weapons of war for all to see to see how great and powerful they are worldly status means nothing in the eyes in the value system of the kingdom of god secondly he's demonstrated true leadership hasn't he the lord of the universe knows what's happened and what has to happen and he's willing to do it taking the initiative to do it no matter how humiliating it might be that is servant leadership true servant leadership not fake it till you make it because it works that's what the world teaches it's true integrated servant leadership thirdly he shattered false humility the lord of the universe doesn't do this to make people think how good he is and think how really humble he is he hasn't put on an outward display of humility in one instance so the world goes well you're fantastic

[18:04] Jesus that's totally different the rest of his life it's consistent with his entire life and consistent with the way he will finish his life he isn't saying that we need to have an annual foot washing ceremony where the Pope and the Bishop and the Reverend doctors and religion come out once a year and do some public display of humility thereby proving that they're truly humble people a once off ceremony can try and mask the real inner truth that a person is not humble the outworking of humility is not a once off occasion the outworking of humility is to be just that an outworking of an inward reality even in and through humiliation I'm not saying that those who come out once a year to do a ceremonial foot washing ceremony have just come out to show they're not thoroughly humble

I'm not saying that I'm just saying that it's possible for a ceremony to mask a deep hypocrisy acting putting on a show which is nothing like the real self false humility is just as offensive as arrogance fourthly this is the big one this is the big one no service is beneath the dignity of a disciple say it again no service is beyond the dignity is beneath the dignity sorry of a disciple Jesus taught that no service is beneath the dignity of the creator of the world he has set the example in verse 16

I tell you now no servant is greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him here's the logic right here's the logic again Jesus is the master his servants his followers are his messengers Jesus takes the role of a slave doing the most menial task that's what servant here means slave better translation menial task in fact the word servant is better read as slave all through the bible nothing is too menial for him and so because his disciples are his servants there cannot be there is not there will not be a task too menial for him to ask his disciples to do can't be won't be and if foot washing is not enough then

Jesus will go even further in his humiliation to suffer a shameful death in service of his disciples notice through the promise of verse 17 in doing things in a similar fashion to Jesus if you get this right you are blessed you don't win salvation by washing feet far from it but you are blessed by knowing the servant is not greater than his master I am blessed if I know my place with Jesus as Lord and demonstrate it by living for him but this doesn't include Judas because he's not amongst the disciples who are clean who are chosen he's the one person in history who I'm certain is not clean and is not right with God and is not in glory but is in hell he's the one person in history I'm certain of so let's think about some shocking discipleship in verses 17 to 20 slaves what Jesus taught his disciples is the most powerful and graphic way is that no service is beneath their dignity

now he assumes they know this now he assumes that we know this now verse 17 and that is shocking discipleship and there's a challenge for the slaves and the masters that follows the challenge for the servants the slaves of Jesus is to be willing to serve by doing something that others that you would have thought was beneath your dignity up until this point be willing to serve by doing something for others that you would have thought was beneath you until this morning today

[23 : 32] I don't know what it is I don't know what it is what jobs would you consider too menial to do what jobs are beneath your dignity what tasks would you balk at accepting if you were able to do them we who follow Jesus are not greater than Jesus and there is no task no service too menial for him to ask us to do there's no task no service which is below our station we see it worked out in the rest of the we sung the song from Philippians 2 this morning the Philippians are told to be like Jesus who humbled himself taken the very nature of a servant and then was exalted by God to the right hand of the Father Romans chapter 12 verse 3 servants disciples we are to get on with serving one another following the example of

Jesus that's normal Christianity and we see a great promise passed down the line here notice those who receive the one that Jesus sends receives Jesus himself and the one who receives Jesus receives the one who sent him that is receives God the Father himself Jesus will soon be sending the disciples out to take the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth the gospel that he Jesus is the Christ that he is the Lord and that whoever believes in him the Lord the Christ will be saved and have eternal life and those who receive that message which the messages will bring will receive the very message of God himself and that is going to be costly for the disciples far more than they appreciate at the moment that

Jesus teaches them now brothers and sisters in Christ we who serve the king we serve a king who not only washed feet but he's also climbed up onto a cross for us there's nothing that he could ask us to do in this world which we could say no to there's no service that we can be involved with that is too low for us and so masters who are slaves of Jesus many of us are masters we have people we lead we have people who service consider the example of Jesus do likewise for our lord and teacher teaches us the way to lead and that is to lead in humble service well we're just about done with our time but have a look at the shocking truth you see there in verses 21 to 30 we won't spend much time on here because it's pretty clear after saying these things

Jesus is troubled again he'd been troubled earlier in chapter 12 but he's troubled again the reality of the cross is coming even closer and we get an eyewitness report of the discussion going on Jesus announces that someone from among them will betray him and they all wonder who will be who's it going to be and we become insiders now and learn that it'll be Judas I mean how could Judas do such a thing turn on the one who's just washed his feet turn on the one he'd been with three years turn on the one he'd seen do all kinds of things even raise the dead how could Judas turn on him and we know more than the other disciples at this stage for they think he's gone out to get food for the Passover that night or to give money to the poor but he's actually going out to betray Jesus into the hands of the enemies and so

Jesus says do it quickly and it was not darkness has overcome Judas friends it is possible that those who appear on their inner circle with Jesus are not disciples of him are not clean but are possibly in league with Satan may that never be true true of any of us let's pray our father in heaven we thank you for the lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich became poor so that we who are poor might become rich we pray in your mercy that you'd help us to hear his words help us and to live and to live for his praise and glory and yours alone and not the fickle praise of this world and we pray in your mercy there'd be none of us that would sell out on Jesus but that through us many would come to know him and praise him as we do help us to serve him as he has served us we pray in Jesus name amen