

## LifeChange Bible Study Series

### JOHN 13:1–17

#### Love and Betrayal

On Sunday the crowds hailed Jesus as King while He rode royally into Jerusalem and up to the temple. But instead of claiming His throne and launching the war of liberation, Jesus again drove the merchants from the temple and sat down to teach (Luke 19:45–21:38). The crowds were disappointed but the Sanhedrin was not appeased, and one of Jesus' closest disciples was fed up. Jesus had sealed His own fate.

By Wednesday He had nothing more to say to the crowds—they had judged themselves by their attitudes toward Him. But He had much more to say to His twelve core disciples and little time to say it. On Thursday evening the thirteen men gathered around a meal; only Jesus knew what would happen before dawn. Read 13:1–38.

**For Thought and Discussion:** How does John describe the torture and death Jesus was about to undergo (13:1, 3)? What does this tell you about John's (and Jesus' attitude toward those sufferings?

#### Footwashing (13:1–17)

1. How would you describe Jesus' attitude in 13:1–5?
2. How is the statement, "the Father had put all things under his power" (13:3) consistent with the fact that Jesus is about to be arrested, tortured, and executed?

**For Thought and Discussion:** Some Christian groups literally wash each other's feet periodically. What are some potentially good and bad results of doing this once or as a periodic practice? How could the good results be achieved without the bad ones?

**Iscaiot** (13:2). This probably means "man of Kerioth [a town in southern Judea]." "Judas was thus the only one of the Twelve who was not a Galilean."<sup>2</sup> He may have had sympathies with the Judean hierarchy; he may have finally admitted to himself that Jesus was not the Messiah he wanted; none of the gospels tell us more about

his motives than that ***the devil had ... prompted Judas*** to betray Jesus for money (Luke 22:1–6; John 13:2).

***Took off his outer clothing*** (13:4). “Jesus stripped to a loin cloth, just like a slave.”

***Wash his disciples’ feet*** (13:5). This was a menial task (recall the symbolism of feet from 1:27 and 12:3). People went barefoot or in sandals, so their feet got muddy and dusty outdoors. Guests’ feet were usually washed on arrival at the host’s home—certainly before the meal—by a servant, but Jesus did it in the midst of the meal to make a point.

3. Why do you think Peter objects to what Jesus is doing (13:6–8)?

***Only ... their feet*** (13:10). A person going to a feast at that time bathed at home so that when he arrived he needed only to have his feet washed for him to be entirely clean.

4. Why does Jesus insist that Peter needs Jesus to wash his feet, although he doesn’t need a full bath (13:8–10)? What point is Jesus making?

5. The footwashing has several lessons for the disciples. What lessons or meanings does Jesus state in ...  
13:8–10?

13:12–17?

**For Thought and Discussion:** How does the footwashing illustrate the meaning of the Cross?

**For Thought and Discussion:** Think of as many ways as possible in which modern Christians can wash each other’s feet.

**Optional Application:**

- a. Whose feet do you need to wash and how?
- b. Who washes your feet? How are you showing your gratitude for this?

- c. Ask God to make you quick to wash others' feet with joy and love. Ask Him to make you willing to let others wash your feet.
- d. Meditate on 13:14, 17.

**Messenger** (13:16). See the note on “sent” on page 55. The word here is *apostolos*, suggesting the Jewish *shaliach*, the one sent with the authority and obligation to do what the sender would do. Notice that what is done to the *shaliach* is regarded as done to the sender (13:20).

**Optional Application:**

- a. Jesus knew who He was, where He was from, where He was going, and what power and authority He had (13:3). Do you fully know these about yourself?
- b. Why does knowing these things about yourself make it possible for you to wash others' feet without pride or resentment?
- c. Ask God to enable you to know who you are.

**Optional Application:** What are the implications of 13:20 for your decisions and priorities?

6. In your judgment, to what extent do 13:16 and 13:20 describe the authority and mission of only a few leaders like the apostles? To what extent do these verses describe your authority and mission? (Give reasons for your view.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Navigators, [LifeChange: John](#), ed. Karen Lee-Thorp, The LifeChange Bible Study Series (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 139–142.