

I should begin this message with a warning.

The lesson for today is likely one that you will agree with.

But it is a lesson that is exceedingly difficult to actually do.

To live life as a servant of Jesus and others is difficult. You are going to need help.

You are going to need Jesus to be at work in your life. You cannot do this on your own.

And you will need to be careful to not deceive yourself that you are doing it when you really are not.

A servant does not have his or her own agenda. He or she obeys the words of Jesus in the Bible.

He or she puts the needs of others before self. It's not easy.

He or she chooses to lay aside privilege and power over others for the sake of Christ and others.

To follow Jesus is to make yourself a servant like Him.

In John 1-11 the author, the Apostle John, has been showing us who Jesus is.

He is God, Word of God, the Light of the World, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Son of Man.

He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

Jesus is the one who gives living water and the one who grants eternal life.

Jesus is the one who has come from heaven and is going back to heaven.

Jesus is the one who shows us God the Father, the one who existed before Abraham.

Jesus taught with authority. He healed people and walked on the water.

Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Door of the Sheep, the Good Shepherd.

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and He raised Lazarus from the grave.

Then in John 12 Jesus makes a turn toward the Cross.

He comes to Bethany and is anointed by Mary in preparation for His death.

After this He enters Jerusalem and begins speaking of His coming Crucifixion.

Now, in John 13, Jesus begins His final and longest teaching with His disciples.

In John 13-17 we read the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus teaching His disciples before Gethsemane.

This is the longest and most intimate of all Jesus' sermons recorded in the gospels.

It begins with an object lesson and ends with the High Priestly Prayer, all of chapter 17.

This morning, we will read and learn from the object lesson that begins this lengthy teaching.

And right away we learn Jesus' motive in His instruction. Love.

Jesus knows what is coming and He loved these disciples of His.

I. “He loved them to the end.”

John 13:1-4

In John 13:1 we are reminded that “His hour had come.”

This is the “hour” that Jesus had been planning and thinking about ever since John 2:4.

In **John 7:30** His enemies wanted to arrest Him. Also, **John 8:20**.

In **John 12:23-27** Jesus is thinking about this hour that is now upon Him.

Jesus, at the beginning of chapter 13 knows that He is about 20 hours from His brutal execution.

He is having, with His disciples His last meal. He will not sleep again.

What is on His mind as He is sharing this supper with His disciples? How much He loves them.

What a contrast then are the actions of Judas at this moment. (vs. 2)

Jesus is motivated by love; Judas by selfishness, manipulation, greed, and anger. The devil is influencing him.

It is this motive that moves Jesus to get up from the table and take the place of a servant.

It is because Jesus has come from the Father and is going back to the Father that He does what He does.

He knows that God is in complete control and He wants His disciples to learn this essential lesson.

What lesson? And did they learn it? It is the lesson of servanthood and they did learn it.

Paul, the Apostle, who would also learn it, teaches us this lesson, this example.

Philippians 2:1-11 Do you see the goal? Unity in the Spirit of God.

Do you see the command? To serve others.

Do you see the example? Jesus.

Do you see the pattern? Humbling now, glory later.

II. Jesus became a servant to make you clean.

John 13:5-11

Now to the object lesson. Jesus makes Himself the lowest of servants.

In ancient Jewish society, wealthy Jews would have a servant, usually a woman, come in to wash feet.

Usually the table would be low, just off the floor, and those dining would recline to eat.

When they did, just before the meal the servant would come in with a basin and towel to wash their feet.

This was necessary because the feet would have become dirty with dust from the roads.

And, those dining did not wish to use their hands to eat after washing feet. A servant could do it.

(vs. 5) Now, when Jesus gets up, puts His robe aside, and gets a towel and basin, the disciples are speechless.

They do not know what to do. We know this because it is not until Jesus gets to Peter that anyone says a thing.

We will discover in Jesus' words, that Jesus is not merely presenting an example, but also a metaphor.

His effort to wash the feet of His disciples is a picture of His cleansing ministry.

If you are going to be in fellowship with Jesus, God Himself, you need to be cleaned up.

You need to be washed by Jesus. He needs to clean you up from your sin and corruption.

Only Jesus is able to clean us of impure motives, thoughts, and actions.

Look at verse 8. Do you know that, if Jesus does not wash you, you cannot be a Christian?

There is no follower of His that does not require His washing.

But when Jesus does get to Peter, Peter speaks, breaking the awkward silence. (vss. 6-10)

When Peter speaks, he makes perfect sense from the world's point of view.

Jesus is more important than he is. Fact. Less important people are supposed to serve the more important.

Can there be any debate? Isn't this how things work?

Jesus has had to confront this thinking in His disciples before. **Mark 10:35-45**

Who is your example for living? Important people in this world? Politicians? Rockstars? Actors?

Or Jesus? It really matters.

III. Jesus wants you to follow His example of service.

John 13:12-17

Which is where Jesus goes next in His teaching.

He does not let His disciples work out the lesson on their own. He makes it explicit.

He does not want them to miss the lesson because they need it, as do we.

So He asks (vs. 12), "Do you know what I have done to you?"

Understand that His washing their feet is symbolic for all that He has done and will do for them.

From the beginning of His ministry until the very end, in 20 hours, Jesus is serving them, sacrificially.

He is using His time and His strength to meet their needs, to help them.

In verses 13-15, Jesus makes His point clear. They are to serve like He has served them.

In verses 16-17, Jesus provided the rationale. In two parts.

Are you ready? Here is why you must serve Jesus and others sacrificially.

1. (vs. 16) Are you greater than Jesus? Think about this. It is an important question for you.

If not, you are required to obey His orders and do as He did. This is your assignment.

2. (vs. 17) Do you want a blessing from God? There is nothing better in this life.

If you do, you need to know and do these things. You need to serve Jesus and others.

So, what does this mean for you to be a servant like Jesus?

I would like to explore this question with you in three areas: home, work, and church.

There are other areas, to be sure, but considering these will help with all the others.

Home: What would it mean for you to serve like Jesus at home?

I'll begin with a verse that every person should memorize, whether you are 5 or 95.

Philippians 2:14, "Do everything without complaining or arguing."

Listen to people and do what makes them feel loved. That is a beginning.

Husbands, do you value your wives? Does she know it? She needs to.

Wives, does your husband know that you love Him and support Him?

This is way more important than him knowing what you want him to do.

Young people, do your parents feed you, clothe you, pay your bills?

The least you can do is ask them how you can help and then do that with enthusiasm!

Work: We live in a world where most people do the minimum required to earn their pay...
And they try to make their bosses and coworkers like them and think well of them.
Jesus expects more from you. He wants you to work for God and not for men.
Which means that you need to work with an attitude of joy and thanksgiving.
You need to find ways of serving your bosses and coworkers above what is required.
You must be a Christlike blessing to those around you. A lost world is watching.

Church: We are a family. We care about one another and about each other's kids. We need to show it.
Is your family involved so that your kids can see you serving and learning? Your kids need this.
Are you looking for ways that you can grow in serving and developing your ability to lead?
Remember, according to Jesus, leadership is serving.
Are you filling the gaps? In a family sometimes we have to help out just where it's needed.
How is your giving? Are you giving God the leftovers? Or are you tithing from the first fruits?
When Jesus looks at your life, can He see that He and others are your priority?

IV. Jesus did all this so that you would trust Him.

John 13:18-20

He wants you to believe in Him and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

Jesus is here speaking to those who really believe in Him.

So, if you are just here because you have to be or because you want to just appear religious...

Well, then, you can go to sleep and ignore this next bit.

If you are going to eventually walk away from Jesus or betray Him, this is not for you.

Jesus is telling us all how it is going to happen so that you will trust Him.

Because there are many times in life when things seem to be going wrong, when you want to give up.

But faith means trusting Jesus and serving Him even, especially, through those times.

There will be times when you will think that you know better than Jesus how to live.

When you will be tempted to fight or gossip or manipulate or act out your anger rather than to serve.

There will be times when you will think that you have a better plan to get what you want.

But actually, you don't really want what you want. You want what Jesus wants.

And there is only one way to get that and that is by living Jesus' way.

If you make living like a servant your way of life, you will be blessed by God.

Allow me to add this: Here you are living in the USA, with more opportunity, money, and education...

Than 95% of the people in the world. What are you doing with it?

Luke 12:48, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required."

So what will you do?

Will it be for you your way? Or will it be the Jesus way?

And His way is always to serve.