

Eternity Daily Bible Study No. 284

THE PASSION SERIES – THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTERS 12-21

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John 13:1-4 And before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come when He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own in the world, He loved them to the end. (2) And when supper had ended, the Devil now having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon to betray Him, (3) Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and went to God, (4) He rose up from supper and laid aside His garments. And He took a towel and girded Himself.

John's talent for dramatic juxtaposition is most evident here. Jesus is at the height of His Messianic self-awareness and power "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and went to God"– and He picks up a towel and washes the disciples feet. What a Lord! What a humble Savior! He even washes Judas' feet!

No matter how high we may be, even an apostle or a great evangelist, we must still serve others. The internationally known bible-teacher John Stott visited a church in the Philippines and a friend commented "He is so humble, he even washed his own plate." We should all have a witness like that! Jesus washed not only His own plate – but the feet of others.

There is no place for lordly conceit or mega-star status in the Church of God. If we roll into town in a limousine and sweep past the poor and have bodyguards and dazzling jewelry and act with haughty disdain – then we are not of Christ!

To Jesus everyone was important, and worth serving and worth dying for.

Jesus did not divide humanity into an "A list" and "the rest". When Jesus threw a banquet the poor and the lame and the sinners were welcome. There was no muscle-bound bodyguard on the door keeping out the "undesirables". Thus Hollywood society and Jesus kingdom are exact opposites.

For those of us who travel in ministry and speak at conferences it is easy to get a swelled head. To think we are important and to insist on certain perks. How can we counter this? Always eat whatever set before you, often stay in the houses of the saints rather than hotels, make time for people even when you are tired, refuse flattery, and try not to see some people as useful and others as not so useful.

The other thing is to always keep in mind the poor in God's kingdom - to consciously serve the suffering church and its needs. It is far easier to always serve the rich church and its needs! This means my ministry is focused on training pastors in Asia especially those pastors that work among the urban poor in the shantytowns of the mega-cities. As I focus on meeting the needs of people that can never repay me, who will not ever send in a donation – then I am starting to wash the feet of the saints.

Jesus served all. He served Nicodemus and he served Mary Magdalene. He served both Judas and Peter. None of us are worthy of His love and yet we all can receive it. This breaks me – that he who has power over all things should meet my needs. If you had power over the entire world what would you do? Pick up a towel and wash feet? Jesus who made the world, served us.

What we do when we have power over others shows what is in our heart. The High Priest had power over Jesus and crucified Him, the Roman soldiers had power over Jesus and scourged Him, the passers-by used their power to hurl insults at a helpless Savior. If someone is totally in your power –you must love them and serve them – and no more so than in marriage as a husband to a wife. Husband – wash the feet of your wife!

Ephesians 5:25-29 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, (26) that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, (27) that He might present it to Himself as the glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) So men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord loves the church.

Now Jesus does this at the end of the Supper “And when supper had ended”. The Passover was to eaten in haste with sandals on one's feet (Exodus 12:11) – so they kept their shoes on as good Jews. Jesus kept even these small points of the Law. He kept the traditions – then dispensed with them. Then He used the occasion of taking off the shoes as a teaching point. The end of the last Passover supper was the beginning of a new “ritual” – the ritual of humble service!

(Just in case you are confused Jewish days were sundown to sundown thus the supper was in the Passover evening, which was before the Passover daytime (Good Friday). So it the foot-washing was after the Passover meal but before Passover morning.)

“When Jesus knew that His hour had come when He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own in the world, He loved them to the end.” Jesus was a sojourner. He was here for a little while - then the time came for Him to leave and go back to the Father. Love must dictate our actions even at the point of departure to be with God: Philippians 1:22-24 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet I do not know what I shall choose. (23) For I am pressed together by the two: having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. (24) But to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

He loved them to the end. Of course, for God is love and Jesus is God. We also should not stop loving others. There is no point when we can say “Enough, I've loved enough, now I will take it easy and serve no more, now others will serve me.” Love endures in service. Do not grow weary in doing good!

Blessings,

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