

November 1, 2020

“Serving Love”
Lesson 1 of Unit

John 13:1-15, 34-35

Intro

The apostle John was one of those closest to Jesus, and most trusted by Jesus. He was invited by Jesus to see his transfiguration on the mountaintop. He was one of the three Jesus took with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was arrested. He is right next to Jesus at the last supper, laying on Jesus' chest (John 13:23). John is the disciple Jesus directs from the cross to care for His mother, Mary. All these show the high degree of trust and intimacy that existed between John and Jesus.

Apply that trust to John's gospel. Though there is much written in it that covers the same information as the other three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), a great deal of it is also unique, found nowhere else in the New Testament.

This is true of today's text, which covers events at the Last Supper. John's account doesn't focus on the bread and the cup as the other three do, but rather on several significant things that Jesus says and does shortly before going to the cross (read chapters 13-17).

Read John 13:1-15

1. Note on vs. 1a about the Passover Festival. The Festival commemorates “passing over” the homes of the Israelites marked with blood on the doorpost when in Egypt. It is the final of the 10 plagues, which when carried out, caused the death of thousands of Egyptians, and which prompted Pharaoh to finally let the people leave Egypt. It had been occurring for hundreds of years at the time of this passage, and Jews from all over Judea and even further came to Jerusalem to celebrate this week-long Festival. This is why Jesus and his disciples are in the city at this time.
2. What does the phrase, “His hour had come” mean here? What does “he loved them to the end” mean? What do these two phrases tell us about Jesus?
3. What has happened to Judas in vs. 2? How is his experience here perhaps similar to our experience in living the Christian life? What is involved in the act of betrayal? How might that be both similar and different from our Christian experience?

4. What are the three things that Jesus “knew” in vs. 3? What is significant about Jesus is thinking of these three things?

5. In vs. 4-5, Jesus prepares to wash the disciples’ feet. What words would you use to describe washing the feet of someone who wore sandals? Typically, who would wash the feet of guests? Why does that person get that job? How would they feel about doing this task? What does this event tell us about Jesus, and about what He is saying to His disciples through His actions?

6. In vs. 6-9, what is Peter’s stance to having Jesus wash his feet? What does that tell us about Peter? What does Jesus’ reply mean to both Peter and to us spiritually? What does Peter’s second reply suggest that Peter now perceives about Jesus?

7. What does what Jesus says in vs. 10 mean to believers? What does it mean to have a “bath” versus “washing our feet”?

8. In vs. 11, what is implied by “not every one was clean”?

9. What major point is Jesus making in vs. 12-15? Does one’s position of authority change if that one serves another, even by doing menial or subservient work?

10. In vs. 15, Jesus says, “I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Is He telling us to wash one another’s feet? If not, what is his point in this verse?

Read John 13:34-35

1. Twice in vs. 34, Jesus says “love one another”. How is this phrase different in meaning than our usual thought that we should show love to other people? Why is this distinction important?

2. What is the important in vs. 35 of Christians doing what Jesus commands in vs. 34? What’s one thing you are doing well in this area right now? What’s one thing you’d like to do better?

Application: We are called to have “clean bodies” that need frequent “foot washing”. As we live from day to day, we are called to examine ourselves for signs of both pride and self-serving, but also a lack of love toward others. Check out what is said about these two in Psalm 24:3-6 and Matthew 23:25-26.

This passage reminds us that love shows itself through service. “They’ll know we are Christians by our love” says the song. That doesn’t mean just loving other believers. It suggests that the love we share in Christ is to be used to serve the unbelieving world as well as fellow Christians. Look for who you can serve this week; there were definitely be opportunities.

Prayer: Father God, we see that Jesus served others while He lived, and showed his greatest love by dying for us. We ask that you cleanse our hearts that we can follow in Jesus’ steps in how we love others. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

